READING IN TRANCE:
HYPNOSIS AND THE NOVELISTIC IMAGINATION

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary study in comparative literature reconceptualizes hypnosis as an aesthetic activity in light of the phenomenology of novel reading, literary theory, and narrative ethics. It begins by tracing the history of hypnotism in the medical literature, from Mesmer, Puységur, Bernheim and Charcot to Sigmund Freud, and in nineteenth-century fiction, from Balzac, Poe, and Flaubert, to Maupassant, Doyle and Du Maurier. It then turns to contemporary literary theory to examine the common aesthetic features of the novelistic and hypnotic imaginations. Centered on the concepts of aesthetic illusion, absorption-immersion and distance, activity and performativity, it strives to correct misconceptions of the hypnotic state that still portray it as one of pure passivity and receptivity, rather than activity, co-creation, and imaginative participation. By establishing hypnosis as a narrative, rather than purely dramatic-mimetic, practice, it draws out the ethical and therapeutic value of hypnotic and novelistic narration, and the autonomy of the hypnotic-imaginative subject. The analogy between hypnosis and the act of reading fiction thus draws out similar forms of storytelling that enable an "unselfing" of the subject, opening up the individual to other lives, both actual and fictional.

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To Marva.

One does not experiment on subjects; one plays a game with *them.*
—Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, (2009).

I have no doubt that he has some new mesmerist or… trickster of some sort whom he is going to exhibit to us.
—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, (1895).

Novels were held suitable for women, because they were seen as creatures of the imagination, of limited intellectual capacity.
—Martyn Lyons, (1995).

Then, [Cézanne] would step back a little, and judge, his eyes settling on the objects; slowly circling round them, combining, penetrating, taking hold of them. They would fix themselves on a point, with terrible intensity—"I cannot tear them away, he said one day… They are so stuck to the point that I am staring at, that I feel like they might start bleeding." Minutes, sometimes a quarter of an hour, would pass. A kind of sleep seemed to take hold of him. He would sink into the utmost depths of reason and reality, where man's will, perhaps, meets the will of things, and regenerates itself, becomes absorbed in them.
—Joachim Gasquet, (1921).

Table of Contents

Introduction

> The master had but to look at him, when this young man would fling himself back as though struck by lightning, place his hands rigidly at his sides, and fall into a state of military somnambulism, in which it was plain to any eye that he was open to the most absurd suggestion that might be made to him. He seemed quite content in his abject state, quite pleased to be relieved of the burden of voluntary choice. Again and again he offered himself as a subject and gloried in the model facility he had in losing consciousness. So now he mounted the platform, and a single cut of the whip was enough to make him dance to the Cavaliere's orders, in a kind of complacent ecstasy, eyes closed, head nodding, lank limbs flying in all directions.[1]

This excerpt, taken from the final pages of Thomas Mann's *Mario and the Magician*, contains a rich concentration of the central myths and misapprehensions traditionally associated with the experience of hypnotism. In the popular imagination, the hypnotic subject is often portrayed as being in a potentially dangerous state of passivity, a "trance" which turns the individual into an automaton and places them at the mercy of another human being's discourse and will. In Mann's text, stage hypnotism is depicted as public humiliation inflicted upon helpless victims by Cipolla—a crippled and ill-tempered magician, who goes by the nickname Cavaliere.[2] In the passage cited above, audience members watch as the young man on stage is put into a state of oblivious, military-like submissiveness, which takes away his deliberative, critical faculties. With his powers, the hypnotist seems to have stolen the subject's ability to give conscious assent to the actions that he carries out before the audience's hungry gaze.

At the climax of the hypnotic performance, we find several audience members dancing tirelessly beneath Cipolla's command, in a state of blissful, ecstatic unconsciousness. It is no surprise, then, that Cipolla's character was taken to represent the dangers of the rise of nationalist and fascist ideology in the 1920s and 1930s. This is especially evident in the text's depictions of the youthful audience members in the town of Torre di Venere, who display a mixture of brute ignorance and patriotism, indicating their vulnerability to the dangers of politically seductive or suggestive discourse.[3] Cipolla's dictatorial behavior is further emphasized by the fact that his stage accessory is not a magic wand but a whip, "the insulting symbol of his domination, before which

[1] Thomas Mann, *Mario and the Magician,* trans. H. T Lowe-Porter (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1931), 66.
[2] The participants are selected from an enthusiastic and ignorant audience, composed of "the manhood of Torre di Venere ... sundry, fisherfolk, rough-and-ready youths," as well as the educated narrator and his family. Mann, 24.
[3] "It was only too easy to see why he obeyed. After all, obedience was his calling in life." Ibid.

we all cowered, drowned out every sensation save a dazed and outbraved submission to his power."[4]

For many critics, the "generally supine behavior" of Cipolla's audience points ultimately to their passivity and moral inertia in the face of the forces of the irrational.[5]

Comprised of "one long series of attacks upon the will-power," hypnosis in Mann's text is depicted as a state of somnambulism that produces a "loss or compulsion of volition" and transforms Cipolla's volunteers into mere "tools," "puppets on the stage."[6] The hypnotic relation or *rapport* at the heart of all hypnotic phenomena is represented as one of domination and coercion, rather than cooperation or collaboration.[7] Having this "stream of influence… imposed on [them]," hypnotic subjects are reduced to being "perfectly passive," playing "the suffering, receptive, performing part" on stage and demonstrating "the most unconditional and utter self-abnegation."[8]

Furthermore, in Mann's novella, the audience's uncritical enthusiasm and enjoyment of the hypnotic performance is reminiscent of the affective contagion noted in crowd psychology, of the

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[4] Mann, 60. The "riding-whip with a silver claw-handle" that "whistles" and "cut[s] through the air" suggests that Cipolla—who has "the hairdressing of an old-fashioned circus-director"—treats the audience like animals to be tamed. He rides his volunteers like horses—hence the name Cavaliere—holding his "instrument" which "did much to keep rebellion from becoming overt." Ibid., 29; 43; 35; 48.

[5] Nicholas Martin, "Thomas Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer*: 'Simply a Story of Human Affairs'," in *The Text and Its Context: Studies in Modern German Literature and Society,* ed. Nigel Harris and Joanne Sayner (Oxford and Berne: Peter Lang, 2008), 165-76.

[6] Mann, *Mario and the Magician,* 50; 69. This passage occurs at the climax of the novella, after an escalation of dramatic tension: in the second part of his performance, Cipolla the magician shifts from performing harmless tricks, which involve cards and numbers, to carrying out increasingly complex hypnotic phenomena such as catalepsy, hallucinations, paralysis and somnambulism on the members of his audience. As the text and performance unfold, hypnosis is described as a "capacity for self-surrender … for the most unconditional and utter self-abnegation," a "lost freedom of action," a "drunken abdication of the critical spirit" and "yielding to another person's will." Ibid., 17; 62; 65; 68**.** Its moral dangers lie in the threat posed to the autonomy of the modern, rational, self-aware and self-possessed subject. Leading to manipulation, dispossession, and loss of critical faculties, it threatens the individual's ability to constitute him or herself as a subject of both action and enunciation. Because the insidious hypnotic "violation" of the subject occurs on the level of the psyche—it is invisible and impalpable rather than physical—it is reminiscent of the demonic possessions reported during the early modernity of the pre-Enlightenment era.

[7] The hypnotic relation is described with a military lexical field, as a "challenge," a "duel." Cipolla dominates all members of the audience, even—especially—those who try to resist: "One saw it waver, that strength of purpose, beneath the repeated summons and whip-crackings." In the case of one subject who does attempt to consciously resist, the "struggle" is described as a "heroic obstinacy, a fixed resolve to resist" that "needs be conquered … a gallant effort to strike out and save the honour of the human race." This reinforces the climactic ending of the text, where Mario, initially described as a "poor bewildered, victimized creature," commits the final tragic act of shooting the hypnotist, putting an end to the latter's life and "evil" performance. Mann, 10; 15; 67; 22; 27.

[8] Mann, 52. Cipolla defines hypnosis as the operator acting *through* the subject: "it was not the automatons up there who danced, but himself." This explains the irresistible dimension of hypnotic suggestions: yielding is described as a form of relief and, in a sense, as the only remaining act of freedom for the subject: "Who wants to torture himself like that? Is forcing yourself your idea of freedom? … *What a relief to give way.*" Ibid., 23, emphasis added.

dangerous influence of rhetorical discourse on the hypnotized mob, whose passions are easily stirred: "the applause was like a patriotic demonstration."[9]

In political readings of Mann's text, the links between popular representations of hypnosis and loss of conscious awareness justify the analogy between hypnotic trance and the dangers of totalitarianism. Indeed, "as George Orwell said, one of the aims of totalitarianism is not merely to make sure that people will think the right thoughts but actually to make them less conscious; this is exactly the course taken by Cipolla's gradually-increasing power over his audience."[10]

Conversely, not only is hypnosis depicted as a threat to the subject's authority and autonomy, fascism itself becomes illuminated as a perverted form of "hypnotic" influence over the masses. Just as Cipolla's cheap artistic performance is taken to represent the psychological workings of the mass appeal of fascist or Nazi seduction, the "hypnotic, irrational power of Mussolini's or Hitler's oratory" have also notoriously been underlined.[11] Like the hypnotist, "Hitler's overriding aim was to suspend the audience's rational and critical faculties."[12] George Estabrooks, a leading mid-twentieth century authority on hypnosis, even affirmed that "Hitler's emotional domination of the crowd … was only the attack of the stage hypnotist one step removed."[13] And indeed, an early convert to Nazism describes the effects of Hitler's speeches as follows:

> I do not know how to describe the emotions that swept over me as I heard this man. His words were like a scourge. When he spoke of the disgrace of Germany, I was ready to spring on any enemy. His appeal to German manhood was like a call to arms, the gospel he preached a sacred truth. He seemed to be another Luther. I forgot everything but the man; then, glancing round I saw that his magnetism was holding these thousands as one. ... The intense will of the man, the passion of his sincerity conviction seemed to flow from him to me. I experienced an exaltation that could be likened only to religious conversion.[14]

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[9] Mann, 55. As noted above, the audience's mindset underlines the appeal of the dehumanizing and demagogic processes used in fascist ideology. See Martin, 167. Cipolla's hypnotic performance, in this context, can be considered "an image of the Fascist leader's aestheticizing of politics." Alan Bance, "The Narrator in Thomas Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer,*" *Modern Language Review* 82 (1987): 397; 390.

[10] Bance, 390.

[11] Martin, 167-8.

[12] Ibid., 173.

[13] G. H. Estabrooks, *Hypnotism,* rev. ed. (New York: Dutton, 1957), 120-121. Indeed, as Martin observes, the theatrical dimension of Hitler's speeches in the 1920s resembles that of Cipolla's stage hypnosis performance: "Nazi ritual began in the sweaty, smoky beer halls and circus tents of Munich, where Hitler gave his first speeches in the early 1920s. The subsequent addition of technical paraphernalia, such as elaborate lighting and sound effects, merely intensified the Führer's presence, and the later mass rallies at Nuremberg differed only in degree from the earliest gatherings of the faithful. … Hitler regarded oratory as an art-form from the outset, remarking as early as 1922 that he had mastered it. However, he realised that he could add an extra dimension to the traditional view of oratory as purely rhetorical skill, namely, the theatrical power of gesture. Hitler treated each speech as a dramatic performance." Martin, 173.

[14] Kurt G. Ludecke, *I Knew Hitler: The Story of a Nazi Who Escaped The Blood Purge* (London: Jarrolds, 1938), 22-23.

In this disquieting description of a "Dionysian abandonment of the self and its critical faculties," every member of the crowd seems to give in to a perverted form of the oceanic feeling.[15] Subjects undergo a perilous loss of identity and individuality, assuming an irrational, collective personality.

In Mann's text, this tendency is observed with "horrified fascination" by the narrator, who believes himself to be detached from the rest of the audience.[16] However, during the performance, Mann's narrator himself "gradually loses his separateness from the audience, and thus the protective armor of his questioning, independent consciousness."[17] As Ingrid Walsoe-Engel argues, his inability to leave the hypnotic show after the interlude reveals that "[his] identity has merged with that of the audience," as his attention becomes increasingly focused on Cipolla's whip and brandy-glass—the "visual stimuli for the hypnotic process."[18] While claiming to be detached and knowledgeable about the nature of hypnosis, the narratorial perspective itself is not immune to the suggestive influence and seductive force of Cipolla's powers: "the spectator becomes victim as his identification with Cipolla confirms his seduction."[19]

As Alan Bance has noted, Mann's text is thus not "a simple political allegory" but also a statement of the artist's own struggle with the relationship between literature and political responsibility, that poses the question of the influence of art on the recipient.[20] In *Mario and the Magician*, hypnotic discourse can stand in for the dangers of fascism because it both uses and displays the seductive powers of art and language, of poetic and rhetorical discourse. When considered as a form of cheap entertainment,[21] hypnosis is the mirror image of art which has

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[15] Martin, 174.

[16] Ibid., 174. For *fin-de-siècle* descriptions of crowd psychology, see Chapter 2. See Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules*. (1895; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963); Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation études sociologique* (1890; Paris: Alcan, 1921). See also Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,*" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVIII (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), 65-144. Hereafter referred to as *SE.*

[17] Ingrid Walsoe-Engel, "Thomas Mann's Narrative Sorcery: The Structure of 'Mario und der Zauberer,'" *Colloquia Germanica* 22, No. 3/4 (1989): 254.

[18] Walsoe-Engel, 255.

[19] Ibid., 258.

[20] Bance, 286. "Cipolla is a fellow-artist or "brother artist," a term Mann was later to use to characterise Hitler." Martin, 170. Indeed, in his essay *Bruder Hitler* (1938), Mann writes that the dictator is "[e]in Künstler, ein Bruder." See Thomas Mann, *Bruder Hitler,* in *Essays*, vol 4, ed. H. Kurzke and S. Stachorski (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1995), 305-12.

[21] The hall in which Cipolla's performance takes place is "among the proletariat… not much more, actually than a wooden shed…with a turreted entrance, plastered on either side with layers of gay placards." Mann, 23.

prostituted and degraded itself.[22] In its literary representation of hypnosis, Mann's text simultaneously addresses and reveals the misuse of art as a tool of political seduction. In this sense, hypnosis serves as a magnifying tool, pointing to the moral dangers inherent to all artistic creation: its vulnerability to misuse, and its possible subordination to underlying ideological purposes.

In addition to its political aspect, the text has an additional aesthetic and psychological interpretation that sheds further light on the nature of both hypnotic and aesthetic experiences.[23] The claim made by Mann himself, that his novella had not been properly appreciated as a "self-critical exploration of the psychology of the artistic process"[24] is quite significant: not only does Cipolla's performance stand in for the aesthetization of the political, his death is also "a warning to the artist against narcissistic arrogance."[25] As Bance notes, "what *is* unambiguously demonstrated" in Mann's text is that "in the hands of the artist, the relationship between insight and political responsibility is sufficiently complex to make him an unreliable guide when it comes to a political crisis."[26] Cipolla's power, like fascist discourse, is dangerous because it "can 'induce in even the intelligent, cultured, critical observer a sense of fascinated helplessness."[27] Indeed, as previously noted, the narrator himself seems to gradually become complicit and seduced, as "he begins to identify more and more with Cipolla, enjoying the humiliations of the citizenry of Torre."[28] For all his "breadth of culture and his reasoning power," the narrator is "as helplessly drawn into the sphere of Cipolla's magic as the others around him are"; he has become "a part of the malaise which he deplores."[29] Therefore, although critics like Walsoe-Engel claim that this seduction is not to action but to "paralyzed spectatorship," on the contrary, the hypnotic

[22] Its "base" and popular nature is underlined in contrast to the intellectual and aesthetic snobbism of the narrator, toward the Italian "Middle-class native." Mann, 13. Mann's narrator "places the barrier of his educated culture between himself and the world," in a manner both "condescending and ironic." Bance, 391.
[23] In a letter to Louis M. Grant, Mann's retrospective assessment of the text described it as "simply a story of human affairs which should interest the reader for its own sake and not for some hidden meaning" (See Mann, "Letter to Louis M. Grant, 14 October 1949," *DD*, II, 372 372). As I will show in Chapter 4, in this seeming contradiction lays the "trickery" of fictional prose and its similarity with modern, indirect hypnotic suggestions: both convey—ambiguous, nondogmatic—messages by simultaneously claiming not to do so.
[24] Quoted in Martin, 165.
[25] Bance, 395.
[26] Ibid., 397. "The civic virtues claimed by the narrator in his parental role and his stance of Guardian (in a wider metaphorical sense) are at odds with his neutral, not to say irresponsible, aesthetic drive to produce a 'performance' of his own that does justice to the fascinating performance of his fellow-artist, Cipolla." Bance, 396.
[27] Ronald C. Speirs, "The Embattled Intellect," 'The Embattled Intellect: Developments in Modern German Literature and the Advent of Fascism," in *Fascism and European Literature*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Beatrice Sandberg (Berne: Peter Lang, 1991), 35.
[28] Walsoe-Engel, 254.
[29] Bance, 398.

performance reveals the very *impossibility* of pure, detached spectatorship.[30] In this sense, Mann's novella is an investigation of the psychology of the artistic process—including of its own—that reminds the reader of the inescapable nature of suggestion and influence, and of the powers, both fascinating and dangerous, of artistic representation.

Especially noteworthy for the purposes of this study is the hesitation in the narratorial discourse about the nature of hypnosis, which underlies the tension between his educated knowledge or rationality on the one hand and his fascination or susceptibility on the other. Indeed, like the *fin-de-siècle* literary representations of hypnosis to be explored in Chapter 2, Mann's text vacillates between a credulous view—which identifies hypnotic phenomena as manifestations of the occult—and a skeptical view—which dismisses it altogether as charlatanry. This indecisiveness can be traced throughout the history of hypnotism: from its origins in the work of Franz Anton Mesmer, to the present day.[31]

Indeed, the narrator describes hypnosis as a "natural-unnatural field" which spans "from the unimpressive at one end of the scale to the monstrous at the other."[32] Cipolla is said to rely on "powers which in human nature are higher or else lower than human reason: on intuition and 'magnetic' transmission; in short, upon a low type of manifestation."[33] Throughout the text, these "powers" walk the fine line between the explainable and the unexplainable, alternating between manipulative deception and "the most extraordinary displays of clairvoyance."[34] Despite the narrator's "knowledgeable" explanations, hypnotic phenomena remain caught in this undecidable no-man's-land throughout the text: they are characterized by a "dubious amalgam" of the ordinary—commonplace and uninteresting to the educated observer—and the occult.[35]

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[30] Walsoe-Engel, 246.

[31] On the one hand, Cipolla's audience "conceded his possession of strange powers-strange whether for good or evil." On the other, "we began to have our suspicions that the man was sailing under a false flag, only we did not yet know which was the right one." As the narrator points out, "Our feelings for Cavaliere Cipolla were of a very mixed kind, but so were the feelings of the whole audience, if I mistake not, and nobody left." Mann, 48; 36; 57.

[32] Mann, 60.

[33] Mann, 50. Hypnosis is thus opposed to the "objectivity" of the medical field and the hypnotist to its representant, the medical Doctor: the "faithful and honest servant of science" (9). To reinforce the antiquated aspect of hypnosis and link it to superstition, references to Medieval phenomena of mass hysteria are also present, for example when the "long-toothed Anglo-Saxoness in a pince-nez left her seat of her own motion to perform a tarantella in the centre aisle." Ibid., 69.

[34] Ibid., 54. Descriptions of the hypnotist obey a similar alternating movement, as the operator is either portrayed as superhuman—"Our lord and master"—or subhuman, dehumanized—"the weird creature," whose "grotesque and dipping stride" forces his to use his "mental and spiritual parts" to "conquer life." Ibid., 56; 3; 36; 33.

[35] See Mann, 51. One of my goals in this thesis is to resituate hypnotism in the complex middle-ground which is often omitted from binary oppositions that systematically pulls hypnosis toward one of these two extremes.

This mysterious aura proves to be essential, however, to both narrator and performer. Indeed, without it, the seemingly powerful foundation on which the success of Cipolla's tricks depends might begin to crumble. As long as the mystery of his power remains intact—that is, rationally inexplicable—the Cavaliere can maintain his sway over the audience. Similarly, as long as the practice of hypnosis remains obscure, the text itself, having become invested with its own hypnotic power to represent the unexplainable, can sway the minds of its recipients. In this sense, the description of the children's obliviousness toward the "seriousness"[36] of the situation also points to the reader's own potential failure to grasp the *serious* effects of artistic representation and fictional narratives in the actual world: "luckily for them, they did not know where the comedy left off and the tragedy began; and we let them remain in their happy belief that the whole thing had been a play up till the end."[37]

By representing the perverse enjoyment of Cipolla's audience, the text implicitly addresses the reader, reminding her not to grow complicit with the potentially distorting effects of the seductive work of art. It invites us to remain "awake" rather than drift off and become "lost in a book,"[38] losing the critical abilities that make us competent readers, good citizens or ethical agents, self-possessed and rational human subjects. In this sense, hypnosis is not just the object of political criticism; it is also an instrument of self-examination for both artist and reader.

Nevertheless, Mann's text relies on an oversimplification of hypnosis, which depicts it as the domination of a sadistic operator over a purely receptive, passive, *quasi-subject,* a mere automaton. In what follows, I will offer a more nuanced understanding of the hypnotic experience than that offered by the narrator of *Mario and the Magician*, which, as I will argue, requires an examination of hypnotic responsiveness in aesthetic terms.

Indeed, a cross-comparison between hypnosis and art will allow us to reconsider long-standing assumptions about the nature of hypnotic practice, which is still often associated with

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[36] "Thank goodness, they lacked understanding for the disreputable side of the entertainment, and in their innocence were perpetually charmed." Significantly, the children are regularly described in a vocabulary also used to qualify the "good" hypnotic subject: "went into raptures at the festive sight"; "absorbed in the joys of the life on the beach"; "A conjuror! The bare announcement was enough to turn our children's heads," etc. Ibid., 70; 7; 8; 22.

[37] Ibid., 3. This contrasts with the absence of humor of Cipolla himself, who has "not a trace of personal jocularity or clownishness in his pose, manner, or behaviour. On the contrary, there was complete *seriousness,* an absence of any humorous appeal" in him. 27, emphasis added. The tension between the serious and the non-serious is at the heart of my analysis of hypnotic discourse and is developed in its linguistic, ethical and aesthetic implications throughout this thesis.

[38] See Victor Nell, *Lost in a Book. The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

deception, popular culture, mind-control, and cheap entertainment.[39] This comparison will reveal that the ongoing fear and contempt for hypnosis are comparable to the criticism of poetic discourse—that can be traced back to the "Ancient Quarrel" between the poet and philosopher[40] —and of the novelistic genre when it emerged in Modernity.

To correct the misconceptions about hypnosis that still prevail to this day, two preliminary shifts are necessary. First, one must acknowledge the dramatic transformation that hypnotic theory and practice underwent during the twentieth century, from the traditional authoritarian methods of the nineteenth century to the emergence of indirect, permissive models of hypnotherapy after World War II. Then, one must uproot hypnosis from the usual contexts in which it is examined, such as musical hall stages, criminal courts, medical amphitheaters, mass hysteria cases, mob mentality, and propaganda speeches. In these settings, the purported pathological nature and moral-political dangers of hypnosis are dramatically overemphasized. However, when it is examined in relation to aesthetic creation and reception, the ubiquity of hypnosis—which also appears in the numerous absorptive and suggestive processes of ordinary psychological experience—and its therapeutic and ethical value, become apparent.

i. Main Argument and Goals

The central argument of this work is that hypnosis should be thought of as being, at heart, a form of storytelling; and conversely, that storytelling can be thought of being, at heart, hypnotic in nature.

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[39] As historian Mark Micale argues, "it would be a mistake to exclude from historical consideration theories and practices that the medical sciences of our own day judge to be wrong, silly, unscientific." Mark Micale, *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America*, *1880-1940* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 10. Indeed, many parapsychological fields of experimentation and inquiry "contributed mightily to the constitution of modern psychological medicine," and hypnotic suggestion can and has serve[d] as a naturalizing explanation of these otherwise seemingly supernatural phenomena. Ibid., 11. However, because of its historical association with the occult and spiritualism hypnosis still often fails to qualify as a "serious" object of study in the aesthetic field, as well as in mainstream therapeutic practice. This study helps to further contribute to its naturalization and legitimization in both of these fields.

[40] See Plato, *Republic*, 607b5–6. For a discussion of the relation between poetry, philosophy and *technè,* see Susan, B. Levin, *The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry Revisited: Plato and the Greek Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127-150. See also Patrick Hayes and Jan Wilm, eds., *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel: Literature, Philosophy, and J.M. Coetzee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

My aim in this thesis is thus to construct and test out an analogy between the hypnotic state and the act of reading fiction, and thereby, between the hypnotic and novelistic imagination. More specifically, my aim is to track the aesthetic concepts—such as fictionality, aesthetic illusion, narrativity, character, plot, perspective—at the heart of hypnosis, and to shed light on the continuous reemergence of hypnotic concepts—such as absorption, dissociation, suggestibility, and rapport—both in the history of medicine and psychoanalysis, and in literary theory. To do so, I will not limit my inquiry to explicitly thematized literary representations of hypnosis. Rather, I will uncover the various, structural, "hypnotic" processes at work in literary texts, and simultaneously, illuminate the various "literary" aspects that operate in hypnotic discourse. In other words, highlighting the hypnotic (suggestive, absorptive, and immersive) dimension of our modes of relating to aesthetic objects—and to novels in particular—will, in turn, reveal the aesthetic (active, imaginative, and narrative) dimension at the heart of hypnotic experiences.

To construct my analogy, I will thus reconceptualize hypnosis in light of the aesthetic experience of reading, and redescribe the act of reading novelistic texts in light of this historical reimagining. By drawing out the analogy between hypnosis and reading, I hope to cast a new light on the relations between hypnotic subjects-suggestions-operators, and novelistic readers-texts-narrators-authors, bringing to the foreground the suggestive and potentially transformative potential of fictional utterances, their ability to *say*, *show* and *do* something in the real world. By describing hypnosis as an aesthetic illusion, I aim to reconceptualize the "trickery" inherent to both hypnotic and aesthetic experience, underlining not only its inevitability, but also its value and benefits.

While it does take into consideration the level of artistic creation and the discourse of the hypnotist and narrator, my study of the relation between hypnosis and aesthetics will focus heavily on the activity of the "recipient," identifying the similarities between the capacities mobilized in the reader and the hypnotic subject. My contention is that in both hypnosis and novel reading, an experience of aesthetic "recentering" occurs, where the recipient temporarily diverts their attention away from the immediate environment and becomes immersed in a fictional universe. The process of absorption and dissociation at the heart of the hypnotic experience and the temporary "willful suspension of disbelief" of fictional reception can thus be thought to be mutually illuminating.[41]

[41] See Coleridge's use of the phrase in his account of the origin of the Lyrical Ballads in Chapter XIV of the *Biographia Literaria*: "In this idea originated the plan of the Lyrical ballads; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should

Rather than a mere state of gullibility or an absence of critical faculties, fictional-hypnotic suspensions of disbelief constitute forms of willful receptivity and active responsiveness. In both hypnosis and novelistic recentering, the subject is invited to imagine "what it is like being a different type of organizing centre within fields of experience that are different from those of which [we] have direct personal knowledge or acquaintance."[42] Because they modify the context of our experience and temporarily determine our intentionality or thought-content, in both hypnosis and novel reading, "'I' can be changed."[43] As I will argue, the forms of understanding which stem from this process of aesthetic-hypnotic recentering can be conceptualized as a kind of "unselfing," which enables valuable transformations in the subject. The "loss of self" which occurs in reading and hypnosis should thus be rethought, as a potentially enriching form of self-discovery and self-transformation, rather than mere dissolution or dispossession.

From this preliminary formulation, two central stakes of this project can be drawn out. First of all, from a literary perspective, this study of hypnosis serves to excavate two ancient problems: that of *mimesis* on the one hand,[44] and of the "Ancient Quarrel" on the other.[45] By reconceptualizing the suggestive nature of fictional-hypnotic utterances as potentially beneficial, my goal is to portray hypnosis as a "serious" and aesthetically significant activity.[46] In this sense, myths about hypnotic passivity must be dispelled, just as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century concerns about novelistic corruption and the "irrationality" of the—often female—reader were.[47]

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be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* ed. G. Sampson and A. Quiller-Couch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 52.

[42] Ciarán Benson, *The Absorbed Self. Pragmatism, Psychology and Aesthetic Experience* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 162.

[43] Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 162.

[44] Through the reexamining the question of immersion into fictional worlds and the aesthetic-realist illusion, this project reexamines the power of novelistic prose to create illusory experiences that produces "truths" through tricky or deception. By underlining the active dimension of hypnotic responsiveness, it argues against descriptions of hypnotic "mimetic" behavior as pure passivity. Furthermore, just as Aristotelian philosophy helped rehabilitate *mimesis* against Platonic conceptions of art, its reemergence in the context of contemporary discussion of hypnosis will help reveal the therapeutic-ethical value of hypnotic narratives and their role in the constitution of the good life in Chapter 4.

[45] Indeed, my goal is to show how, through their ability to "stir the passions," literary and hypnotic discourse produce transformative, that is, *valuable*, rather than corruptive*,* effects on their recipients.

[46] Here, the term "serious" is used in the sense in which Searle speaks of fictional utterances. See John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," *New Literary History* 6 (1975): 321.

[47] See for example: "In the eighteenth century, the novel was not regarded as a respectable art-form, but in the first quarter of the nineteenth century … it became the classic literary expression of triumphant bourgeois society." Martin Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," in G. Cavallo and R. Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West* (Amherst and London: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 314.

Secondly, a contemporary study of hypnosis will allow to reemphasize the value of the "non-rational," on both aesthetic and therapeutic levels. However, as we shall see, this neither involves reverting to the discourse of Romanticism, nor carrying out an apology of madness in the spirit of the Surrealists. Rather, it aims to underline the "sanity" and non-pathological dimension of hypnotic trance, the therapeutic value of manipulating unconscious mental processes and representations, and the cognitive value of our emotional responses. In the field of literary theory, moving beyond the "Ancient Quarrel" in this manner enables us to further reconcile the affective and cognitive dimensions of human understanding and aesthetic reception, such as reading fiction. From the perspective of the history and theory of psychotherapy, the reexamination of the therapeutic value of hypnosis further underlines the limits of biophysiological, positivist, neuro-cognitivist, and reductively rationalist, paradigms. It brings to the fore the value of therapeutic models that use the potential of evocative, fictional, immersive and metaphorical discourse and storytelling, rather than analytic or cognitive insight, or psychiatric pharmacology.

ii. Reading in Trance: The Hypnotic Dimension of Novelistic Reception

This thesis comprises a comparative study of medical and fictional literature about hypnosis, from the early nineteenth century to the present day, in both anglophone and francophone contexts. It proposes close readings of literary texts and an intellectual history of hypnotism, working with the assumption that the art-science relation during the nineteenth century was "mutually originative and reciprocally enriching."[48]

As indicated previously, one of my goals is to offer a reconceptualization of hypnosis that can allow us to redescribe the act of reading novels. Rather than adhering to a formalist conception of the text in which the latter remains cut off from the world, this study emphasizes the connections between the text and the—empirical—reader. The perspective I adopt throughout thus considers the psychological and affective dimensions as central components of the reading process, and absorption and immersion as key factors in the phenomenon of aesthetic responsiveness.

Furthermore, this project does not follow the methods of reading characteristic of the hermeneutics of suspicion. It does not propose a symptomatic mode of reading literature in which latent meaning and unconscious fantasy are excavated from beneath the surface of the text. Rather,

[48] Micale, *The Mind of Modernism,* 3.

by using the "hypnotic unconscious" as a starting point, it reveals the immersive, absorptive dimension at the heart of the artistic experience and examines what the text *does* to the reader, and conversely, what the reader *does* in receiving it, taking into consideration the psychological, affective, and unconscious dimension of readers' responses. It takes seriously—and is sympathetic toward—reading for pleasure, naïve reading, and affective forms of reading. It thus extends the scope of "reding novels" beyond the technical competencies of professional or academic readers, which often involve forms of critical and affectless distance.[49] In this sense, it strives to rehabilitate what was once pathologized, including the "reading trance" of the non-professional reader. It "lets stories breathe," as Arthur Frank puts it, in order to better observe their impact on the actual world, and illuminate the aesthetic-psychology relation in a reparative manner.[50]

From a methodological point of view, my analogy between hypnosis and novelistic reading also draws on several literary theoretical and critical traditions, which are interwoven throughout the following chapters. These traditions yield rich concepts that illuminate various aspects of the hypnotic-novelistic imagination. First of all, reader-response theory, as well as pragmatist and phenomenological aesthetics, which shift the emphasis from the written text to the role of the reader, enables us to rethink the role of the hypnotic subject as the interpretative, "realizing" and creative consciousness who, like the reader, actualizes and concretizes the operator's hypnotic utterances or "text." As John Dewey puts it, in the aesthetic realm, "to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience," a claim that applies to hypnosis and novel reading alike.[51] Without the subject's active performance—her "filling in the gaps" or realizations (*konkretisiert*) of the hypnotic-novelistic work—there would be no "work" at all.[52]

As Wolfgang Iser shows, just as "the stars in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable."[53] As I will argue, hypnosis functions in a similar way: without the subject's interpretative and performative acts, without the process by which she "actualizes the virtual dimension" of the suggestions, hypnosis would be a mere failure in communication, or a collection

[49] Of course, all academic reading is not incompatible with emotional responsiveness to texts.
[50] Arthur Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe. A Socio-Narratology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010). See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *Representations* 108, no. 1, (2009): 1–21.
[51] John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (New-York: Minton, Balch and Co), 54.
[52] See Roman Ingarden, *Vom Erkennen des literarisehen Kunstwerks* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), 49.
[53] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process, a Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to poststructuralism,* ed. Jane P. Tomkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 1989), 297.

of false or failed descriptive or declarative utterances.[54] Like reading, which can be defined as the interaction between two consciousnesses that makes the book "exist outside itself," the co-creative hypnotic relation, the intersection between the mind of the subject and of the operator, creates the hypnotic phenomena.[55] Indeed, hypnotic effects emerge out of collaboration, not coercion.

Furthermore, as Ingarden has shown, the fictional world is a "purely intentional correlative of a complex of sentences," the sum of which is "the world presented in the work."[56] Like literature, hypnosis can also be thought of as creating a world extending beyond the perceived sentences, created out of "intentional sentence correlatives" (*intentioinale Satzkorrelate*).[57] Conversely, like hypnosis, reading fiction involves turning the attention *away* from our ordinary lives and adopting a different mode of attention than that which operates in our everyday relation to the natural world. In this sense, phenomenological literary criticism can help illuminate how the temporary suspensions of disbelief involved in hypnotic and literary immersion are comparable to a specific kind of *epochē* or bracketing of the natural attitude.[58]

Because hypnotic discourse is often considered as a form of influence that stems from a specifically "hypnotic" use of language, in this thesis, I will also draw on the conceptual framework of Speech Act theory. By reconceptualizing hypnotic suggestions in light of the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of the operator's utterances, my aim is to show that hypnotic power should not be located in the *person* of the hypnotist. By using Speech Act theory to describe hypnotic suggestions, I will show that hypnotists do not manipulate individuals, but simply use words, whose hypnotic "power" stems from the context in which they are uttered, and the way in which they are—actively—received and interpreted by the listener, rather than from the intention of the speaker. Indeed, the felicity of hypnotic utterances greatly depends on the imaginative and interpretive capacities of the recipient, which underlines the active role of the hypnotic subject. As I will show, hypnotic utterances share similarities with fictional discourse, as both tend to violate ordinary speech conditions and share a comparable, "serious-nonserious," ontological status.

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[54] Iser, "The Reading Process," 279.
[55] Georges Poulet, "The Phenomenology of Reading," *New Literary History* 1, No. 1 (October 1969): 54.
[56] Ibid., 29.
[57] Ingarden, *Vom Erkennen des literarisehen Kunstwerks*, 29.
[58] See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (1929; repr., Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999).

Finally, in this dissertation, I will also use narrative ethics and post-Wittgensteinian moral philosophy and literary criticism, in conversation with narrative psychiatry and psychotherapy, to underline the therapeutic and ethical value of fictional narration, in terms that elucidate the transformative potential of hypnotic and novelistic "restorying." By bringing hypnosis and the novel together under a common "narrative" umbrella, I will show the ethical value of hypnotic-novelistic narratives lies in the subject's engagement with fictional stories, and the modes of attending that stem from it. Drawing on authors such as Iris Murdoch, Cora Diamond, and Martha Nussbaum, I hope to illuminate the ethical-therapeutic value of hypnosis (in its divergence with cognitive therapeutic models) in the same way that they underline the moral value of the novel (as opposed to the philosophical essay).

iii. Conceptual Map: A Few Definitions

Hypnosis.

The *Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis* notes that there are two distinct elements in a hypnotic situation: "hypnosis-as-product" and "hypnosis-as-procedure."[59] The first term refers to the "state" of hypnotic trance, to the alteration or modification of the subject's state of consciousness, which can either be induced or appear spontaneously.[60] The ancestors of hypnosis in this first sense are the theories of "somnambulism" developed in the nineteenth century, as well as the works produced during the "magnetic crisis" of the late eighteenth century in Europe.[61] However, special attention must be accorded as well to the various trance rituals found in "primitive" or "shamanic" societies and religious mysticism.[62] As Brian Inglis notes in *Trance: a Natural History of Altered States of Mind,* the extreme variation in quality, duration and characteristics of trance states as well as the historical and cultural specificities of their different manifestations and contexts complicates the production of a unified definition.[63] Furthermore, some theorists of hypnosis consider the very

[59] Amanda J. Barnier and Michael R. Nash, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis: Theory, Research and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.
[60] As we shall see in Chapter 1, the very existence of such a "state" is still object of theoretical debates.
[61] See: Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
[62] For example, David Dupuis has shown the impact of "suggestion" on the nature and content of hallucinated material in the context of ayahuasca trance ceremonies in South America. See David Dupuis, "Apprendre à voir l'invisible. Pédagogie visionnaire et socialisation des hallucinations dans un centre chamanique d'Amazonie péruvienne," *Cahiers d'Anthropologie Sociale* 17 (2019): 20-42.
[63] Brian Inglis, *Trance: a Natural History of Altered States of Mind* (London: Grafton, 1989).

concepts of "trance states" or "depth of trance" as problematic, since "no stable physiological marker has been found that will reliably identify the 'trance state' and its putative 'depth' across different conditions of responding to suggestion."[64] Trance states are the product of verbal or nonverbal—musical, rhythmical, physiologically or chemically induced—suggestions, which explains the classic definition of hypnosis as a verbally created state of modified consciousness or absorption of the attention, leading to the production of various hypnotic phenomena. Whereas it remained considered as a pathological state for much of the nineteenth century, it is now agreed upon that hypnosis is a natural but induced psychological state.

The *Oxford Handbook* states that "we now think of hypnotizability as a cognitive skill, and we generally think of skills as things that can be acquired, refined and perfected through experience."[65] Just as the history of psychiatry can be considered as the branch of the medical sciences most "marked by the phenomenon of rising and falling diseases," the evolution of hypnotic trance phenomena reveals their historical and cultural malleability.[66] The definition of the hypnotic trance state as the product of suggestion reveals the ebb and flow, the rise and fall in intensity of the fears and expectations that fluctuate throughout history and delineate, via hypnosis, the limits of the sane, the normal or the rational.[67] By using hypnosis to trace the contours of "self-possession" and, ultimately, "sanity," they shield the latter from their feared Others—the pathological, the absent, the irrational, loss of self, and dispossession.[68]

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[64] Michael Heap, Richard Brown and David Oakley, "High Hypnotizability," in *The Highly Hypnotizable Person. Theoretical, experimental and clinical issues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

[65] John F. Kihlstrom, "The Domain of Hypnosis, Revisited," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis,* ed. Barnier and Nash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.

[66] After the nineteenth century, "the decline of hysterical conversion reactions within industrialized and Westernized populations has been accompanied by a rise in depressive and narcissistic disorders." Micale, "On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria. A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis." *Isis* 84, no. 3 (September 1993): 500.

[67] For some historians, the impact of suggestion also has a crucial part to play in the constitution of mental illness and the diagnoses which describe and shape them. "Too little emphasis has been given … to the process of nosological shift and nosographical drift as forces in the history of psychiatry and particularly as factors explaining the recurrent phenomenon of rising and falling nervous disorders." Micale, "On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria," 524. In particular, the diagnosis of hysteria, as French psychiatrist Henri Ey has observed, is "the prototype of a nosographical concept (ailment, syndrome, or symptom) that is undermined in turns by inflation or an equally excessive restriction" Ey, "Introduction a étude actuelle de l'hystérie (historique et analyse du concept)," *Rev. Prat*. 14 (1964):1417.

[68] As Freud writes, "The loss of consciousness, the '*absence*', in a hysterical attack is derived from the fleeting but unmistakable lapse of consciousness which is observable at the climax of every intense sexual satisfaction, including auto-erotic ones. ... The so-called 'hypnoid states'*—absences during day-dreaming—, which are so common in hysterical subjects, show the same origin.*" Sigmund Freud, "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis," (1909), in *SE*, 10:233, our italics. See also the relation between madness and the concept of pharmakon, in Jacques Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness," 1963, in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, (London and New York: Routledge, 1978), 36-76.

As I will argue, behind these fears lays the activity and creative inventive capacities inherent to modified states of consciousness, which are overshadowed by fears that exclude it from the domain of cognition and of the "serious." It is for this reason that François Roustang, in his seminal work *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?*, describes hypnosis as a "paradoxical waking state" (*veille paradoxale*), in order to emphasize the dynamic, active creativity of the hypnotic subject and to distinguish the hypnotic state from the state—and lexical field—of sleep.[69] Roustang's theory of hypnosis aims to emphasize the depth and potentiality for self-knowledge and self-transformation inherent in hypnotic states, in contrast to the narrow scope and capacities of ordinary "waking" consciousness. By rehabilitating the creativity at the foundation of hypnotic trance states, the boundaries between the serious and the non-serious, thought and non-thought, are forced to shift, so that the non-rational and non-conscious can count as forms of thinking, albeit affective, metaphorical, or irreducibly non-propositional.[70]

In its second sense, "hypnosis as procedure"—sometimes called hypnotism—refers to the *technè* or practice by which the state of hypnosis is formally induced by an operator, either in the context of entertainment or in the therapeutic setting. This second meaning designates the formal or artificial recreation of the state evoked in the first. Nevertheless, a formal induction is neither therapeutically essential, nor necessary for the creation of hypnotic phenomena. Indeed, hypnosis can be carried out covertly or spontaneously without a ritualized procedure or explicit mention of its induction. As I will show in Chapter 1, the formal and technical aspects of "hypnosis as procedure" underwent a dramatic shift after the birth of psychoanalysis, moving from old authoritative models based on direct suggestion and inherited from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century magnetism, to the more indirect, permissive and poetic techniques that appeared during the mid-twentieth century.[71]

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[69] François Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1994), 18.

[70] Cognitivist theories of hypnosis, although they eschew the question of the artistic creativity of the hypnotic subject, emphasize the cognitive dimensions of the mental operations occurring during hypnotic trance: "Even the ideomotor phenomena of hypnosis are cognitive in nature, because the motor behaviors follow from suggestions for perceptual change. …The behavioral responses by which we measure hypnotizability follow from suggestion-induced changes in perception and memory." John F. Kihlstrom, "The Domain of Hypnosis Revisited," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. M. Nash and A. Barnier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 28.

[71] A typical modern hypnotherapy session is structured in three parts: a clinical assessment, the (optional) formal induction of a state of hypnosis, and the "therapeutic work" carried out either by suggestive methods for general symptom removal, or in the case of more in-depth, psychodynamic uses of hypnosis, by working through primary process material which emerges during the hypnotic trance.

That said, two contemporary definitions of hypnosis deserve mention for their clarity. First of all, John F. Kihlstrom defines the term as:

> A process in which one person, designated the hypnotist, offers suggestions to another person, designated the subject, for imaginative experiences entailing alterations in perception, memory and action. In the classic case, these experiences are associated with a degree of subjective conviction bordering on delusion, and an experienced involuntariness bordering on compulsion. As such, the phenomena of hypnosis reflect alterations in consciousness that take place in the context of a social interaction.[72]

Second, Herbert and David Spiegel define hypnotic trance as:

> A psychophysiological state of aroused, attentive, receptive focal concentration with a corresponding diminution in peripheral awareness [in which] an individual enters a state of sustained, attentive, receptive concentration, in response to either an inner signal or a signal from another person, that activates this capacity for a shift of awareness and permits more intensive concentration in a designated direction. … Formal hypnosis differs from spontaneous trance in that it is contextually an interpersonal mode of communication. The subject maintains a sensitive, attentive responsiveness to an operator during the trance state. Technically, the authentic hypnotic experience can be defined as formal hypnosis only when it is knowingly induced by the operator; responded to by the subject in a sensitive, disciplined way; and terminated by the operator's signal. … In reality, all hypnosis is a form of self-hypnosis.[73]

Both of these definitions underline the conventionality of the hypnotic contract. Occurring in this specific context of a communicative and thus social relation or *rapport*, the hypnotic state can be defined as a change in subjective experience, which creates alterations in perception, sensation, emotion, thought, belief and/or behavior, both caused and measured by the subject's responses to given verbal—and/or nonverbal—suggestions, but which can only be made possible due to the preexisting context and implicit agreement between operator and subject. These are implicitly defined as roles, and, in principle, reversible positions.

Finally, in this thesis, a third, much more extensive sense of the term "hypnosis" will be frequently mobilized, to refer to the suggestive, mimetic, absorptive or affectively "contagious" phenomena underlying all intersubjective relations—especially in the therapeutic context—as well as aesthetic reception.

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[72] Kihlstrom, "The domain of hypnosis revisited," 21. This definition served as a starting point for the 'consensus' definition of hypnosis crafted by the American Psychological Association's Division 30, the Society for Psychological Hypnosis, in 1993.

[73] Herbert Spiegel and David Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment. Clinical Uses of Hypnosis,* 2nd ed. (Washington D.C. and London: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2004), 35. As Spiegel and Spiegel explain, the capacity for this state varies among individuals and is relatively fixed throughout the adult life cycle. It can be invoked in three ways: spontaneously, in response to a signal from another person (formal hypnosis), and in response to a self-induced signal (self-hypnosis). Furthermore, a spontaneous trance can be either internally aroused (e.g., daydreaming, fugue state…) or instigated by external cues (e.g., fear, seduction, intense concentration).

Contemporary Theories of Hypnosis.

Although I will focus primarily on its therapeutic dimension in this thesis, most contemporary research on hypnosis concerns the *experimental* observation of hypnosis based on standard hypnotizability scales, and constructed with predetermined scripts or protocols in the laboratory setting. These attempts to measure and provide reproducible conditions for the hypnotic experience—which can be traced back to the end of the eighteenth century—are strongly opposed to the way in which hypnotherapy is practiced today. Whereas the former strives to identify objectively observable criteria and "states," the latter is based on flexible, or relatively atheoretical, frameworks which emphasize the specificity of individual cases, adapting its induction methods to each unique subject. Although they are not the primary concern of the practitioner (who focuses on the effects rather than the causes of hypnotic phenomena), the main theoretical models of hypnosis must be mentioned here, as they shed light on the tension which still plagues it to this day.

These explanatory tendencies, which are still in competition, can be distinguished into three broad models: the cognitive, social, and psychoanalytic explanations of hypnotic phenomena. These three categories can also be grouped into two opposing conceptions of hypnosis, which are often referred to as the "state" vs. "non-state" models.[74] Although it is not my purpose to resolve the tensions between these competing models of hypnotic phenomena, in this thesis, I will be mainly adopting social-psychological and psychoanalytic perspectives, rather than a purely cognitivist approach. Indeed, as I will show in Chapter 1 and as the Nancy school already demonstrated during the *fin-de-siècle* heyday of hypnotism, the contextual and individual variations in hypnotic phenomena, the tremendous divergence in results that stem from different *manners* of suggesting and from the experimental context, pose significant challenges to purely cognitive and "state" explanations.[75]

Unconscious

[74] In this case, the psychoanalytic model becomes grouped into the "state" category. For a detailed account of these three theories, see Chapter 1.

[75] Similarly, as Spanos has shown, against the cognitivists, all hypnotic phenomena vary "according to the context and the formulation of the suggestions and thus reveal how the subject interprets the experimenter's expectations." Léon Chertock and Isabelle Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisier to Lacan,* trans. Martha Noel Evans (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 247.

The hypnotic unconscious—both pre- and post-Freudian—needs to be distinguished from other psychoanalytic theories of the unconscious, especially the Freudian topographical model and the Lacanian conception of the unconscious as structured by language.[76] Despite the diversity of the theoretical models which have attempted to describe it since the nineteenth-century, the specificity of the hypnotic unconscious is that it is based not on repression but on automatism.[77] One of the commonly agreed upon criteria for a response to qualify as hypnotic is that it is experienced by the subject as occurring automatically, without the intervention of conscious volition or deliberate decision.[78] As Kihlstrom points out in the *Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis,*

> Hypnotic experiences take place in imagination, but they do not have the same experiential qualities as ordinary mental imagery. Mental images are deliberately, consciously constructed, while hypnotic experiences are generally accompanied by an experience of involuntariness. It is this experience of involuntariness, not the vividness of mental images, that gives hypnotic experiences their hallucinatory quality.[79]

Although during the nineteenth century, the hypnotic unconscious was strongly linked to the phenomenon of *dissociation,* in modern practices influenced by recent findings in neuroscience as well as social and cognitive psychology, it is thought to encompass all of the information which habitually lies outside of conscious awareness—whether perceptual, physiological, emotional, fantasized, mnemonic, etc.[80] It can be considered as synonymous with the "non-conscious," rather

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[76] The hypnotic unconscious is not merely constituted of repressed mental representations or linguistic significations, but also includes the somatic, physiological dimension with which the unconscious can speak with—or through—the body not merely through "symptoms," but in carefully controlled, induced manners. This can be seen in the induction of ideomotor phenomena, which are the artificial but non-pathological equivalent of the psychoanalytic "symptoms," that also speaks with and through the patient's body.

[77] A notion which received its deepest early theoretical treatment in the work of Pierre Janet, but as we shall see in chapter 1, can be traced further back in the history of medicine. See Pierre Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique: Essai de psychologie experimentale sur les formes inférieures de l'activité humaine* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1889).

[78] A "successful" response to hypnotic suggestions is experienced by the subject as having "a quality of involuntariness or effortlessness." Heap et al, 2001, 3. The term "experienced" here is crucial: what matters is that the subject believes that the phenomenon is occurring independently from their own volition, not that it actually is.

[79] Kihlstrom, 28. In recent years, "the theoretical battleground in hypnosis has shifted, from explaining response to hypnotic suggestions in general, and debating the mechanisms of various hypnotic suggestions in particular, to accounting for subjects' experience of involuntariness in response to hypnotic suggestions." Kihlstrom, 35.

[80] Beginning in the 1970s, cognitive psychologists began to elaborate a technical concept of automaticity grounded in the framework of information processing and "limited-capacity models of attention." See for example D. LaBerge and S. J. Samuels, "Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading," *Cognitive Psychology* 6 (1974): 293–323; M. I. Posner and C. R. Snyder, "Attention and cognitive control," in *Information Processing and Cognition: The Loyola Symposium,* ed. R. L. Solso (New York: Wiley, 1975), 55–85. In this framework, automatic processes are "involuntary in the same way that reflexes and instincts are involuntary." Kihlstrom, 35. With the work of Bateson et. al. and the emergence of neuroscientific and non-psychoanalytic explanations of unconscious mental phenomena, the hypnotic unconscious is also often conceptualized in terms of mental "processing"—"computing" in this sense becomes a contemporary version of the automatism already theorized by Janet. Significantly, in contemporary paradigms and unlike what was found in *fin-de-siècle* conceptions of the hypnotic unconscious as inferior and

than the repressed. On the other hand, dynamic and psychoanalytically oriented theories of hypnosis consider the hypnotic unconscious as constituted of primary mental processes—as a reservoir of memories and symbolic or metaphorical representations, associations, fantasies and complexes that can be utilized or worked through in the therapeutic context after the induction of a hypnotic trance. Theoretical models inspired by the work of psychiatrist Milton Erickson also consider the unconscious as a source of skills, resources and learning capacities to be worked with—rather than through or against—as an interlocutor or an ally.[81] In the therapeutic setting, the induction of a hypnotic state is considered as a means to access unconscious material and bring it into awareness for it to be worked through, regardless of the ontological status attributed to the material in question.

In the context of the hypnotic interaction, the term designates the instructions given by the operator to the subject, either by command or by indirect, permissive evocation, of a desired physical, emotional or mental state—such as catalepsy or numbness, negative or positive hallucinations,[82] paralysis or movement, amnesia or remembering, analgesia or hypersthesia, etc.[83] Bernheim's classic account defines suggestion as "an idea transformed into an action."[84]A study of contemporary hypnosis reveals that the phenomena which used to be considered in the

automatic, the hypnotic unconscious today is not opposed to cognitive operations, even if these are considered as "lower" capacities.

[81] Traditionally, hypnotherapists use a wide array of metaphorical and technical means to "communicate" with the unconscious, spanning from symbolic material (images, etc.) to physiological reactions of the body (ideomotor phenomena). Many practitioners use the speech and narration of the patient, who is not asleep and retains full use of their linguistic abilities during the hypnotherapy session.

[82] A list of common suggestions used today are ideomotor suggestions, which induce movement of body parts such as the twitching of a finger, arm levitations etc.), ideosensory suggestions (inducing sensations of coldness, warmth, numbness, etc.), inhibition of movement (also referred to as "challenge suggestions" in the experimental literature) such as paralysis or catalepsy, hallucinations (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory or even gustatory). "Negative" hallucinations refer to the subject being unable to perceive an existing, perceptible object, while "positive" hallucination involve the experience of an object which is absent and imperceptible to exterior observers. Simple suggestions can be combined to create more complex phenomena such as amnesia (post-hypnotic or not), time distortion, regression or futurization, as explored in Chapter 4. I don't think this is essential information here, if you're going to talk about it in chapter 4. I'm sure you define all of this there

[83] A suggestion can be given consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, but also verbally or nonverbally. Suggestions given by another are sometimes called "heterosuggestions," as opposed to the autosuggestions which the subject can give to himself. Autosuggestion is conceived in some models as the foundation of *all* hypnotic phenomena, in which case "all suggestions are auto-suggestions." See Émile Coué, *Self Mastery by Conscious Autosuggestion* (New York: American Library Service, 1922). In the medical literature of the nineteenth century, the term "suggestion" customarily refers to the already executed suggestion, that is, to the successful response or performance by the subject, in addition to the utterance of the operator. These various senses can lead to subsequent confusions regarding the use of terms such as "suggestive" in the literature.

[84] Hippolyte Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics, A Treatise on the Nature and Uses of Hypnotism,* trans. Christian Herter. (1889; New York: London Book Company, 1947), 138.

nineteenth-century models as pathological and *constitutive* of the hypnotic state, such as posthypnotic amnesia, hallucination or dissociation, were merely *induced,* that is, suggested by hypnotic discourse. What was thought of as being merely observed, was in fact created. What was pathologized has now become legitimized as natural and psychological. "Symptoms" such as the protolanguage of hysteria and its conversion symptoms, can now considered as mere hypnotic phenomena, produced by the active performance of a subject who, consciously or not, carries out "serious" games of make-believe and proves to be highly skilled in exercising imaginative and creative capacities.[85] Due to a ubiquity of suggestion in the extensive sense, hypnosis can therefore be thought of as a magnifying mirror, which reveals the underlying, suggestive, nature of human interaction, including in the experimental setting: "What Bernheim and Delboeuf observed in the enlarging mirror of hypnosis and hysteria is a looping [*magnifying*] effect that can be observed in any experimental or clinical situation, no matter how controlled it may be."[86] In experimental settings, the subject's responses to hypnotic suggestions are measured by various standardized hypnotizability scales, which often propose an hypnotic induction followed by a list of increasingly "challenging" suggested phenomena to be accomplished by the subject.[87] However, as Léon Chertock and Isabelle Stengers have demonstrated, unlike behavioral psychology, whose objects must be directly and methodically observable and measured, when it comes to hypnosis, the whole experimental protocol is based on the suggestive nature of the hypnotic relation between subject and operator, thereby revealing not only the impossibility of neutral observation but also the irreducible suggestive core at the heart of the experimental relation.[88]

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[85] For example, post-hypnotic amnesia can be induced, often by diverting the attention away from previous content. Similarly, dissociation is created by alternating and describing contrasting aspects of two different points of view or by focusing the attention of a "reality" (imagined or perceived) which diverts away from the present or immediate surroundings. What was once considered as pathological can thus be rehabilitated as natural and psychological. Rather than signs of weakness, disfunction or pathology, they reveal sensitive and strong—but subtle—aesthetic and imaginative capacities in the subject.

[86] Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Making Minds and Madness, From Hysteria to Depression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 120.

[87] See R. E. Shor and E. C. Orne, *Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility* (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1962); A. M. Weitzenhoffer and E. R. Hilgard, *Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Forms A and B* (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1959).

[88] "How is one, then, to measure a behavior 'objectively' if the very context in which the behavior is obtained … contributes to determining it? We see here the problem of the artifact, classic in all experimental science, is 'dramatically' illuminated by hypnosis. … How can the experimenter objective the fact that he himself is integrated in the experiment in an essentially subjective mode? … Experimental reason discovers that the 'heart' [*coeur*] which it wished to objectify, is the very condition of this objectification." Chertock and Stengers, 240.

In a broad sense, suggestions can also be thought to be omnipresent in ordinary life, as any phenomenon which influences a subject.[89] When we speak of the "suggestive" dimension of a text or work of art, we refer to its ability to affectively or cognitively impact the recipient. The suggestive dimension of literature thus concerns both its persuasive dimension—its cognitive content, the propositional knowledge which might be inferred from it—and its mimetic, affectively "contagious" dimension—its conscious or non-conscious emotional impact on the reader. When considered in aesthetic terms—especially within the framework of literary theories that take into consideration the experience of the subject, such as reader-response theory or phenomenology—it becomes apparent that hypnotic suggestions function in similar ways as literary texts. Indeed, as Stanley Fish has argued, a literary text or utterance is "not an object, a thing-in-itself, but something that *happens* to, and with the participation of the reader."[90]

Dissociation

Crucial for our purposes is the conception of hypnotic dissociation which emerges from the modern conception of suggestion. Rather than the key pathological symptom demonstrated by hysterical subjects and patients suffering from dissociative or multiple personality disorders,[91] hypnotic dissociation can be reconceptualized as an *induced* phenomenon. It can also be conceived as encompassing the non-pathological, dynamic process of temporary (re)directing the subject's *mobile* attention away from immediate surroundings and towards a given object. Dissociation does not necessarily always involve a pathological splitting of the subject. It is merely the mirror opposite of absorption:[92] becoming immersed in *x* involves turning away from *y*. In this sense, association and dissociation can be considered as natural psychological phenomena which both pertain to the functioning of ordinary consciousness and vary as a function of the object of

[89] "Suggestibility" is the ability to be influenced by a suggestion, regardless of the state of consciousness of the subject. "While hypnosis may enhance suggestibility, at the very least it is clear that suggestibility is something that also occurs in the normal waking state." Kihlstrom, 38. Suggestibility is distinct from hypnotizability or hypnotic "susceptibility," which adds the trance state component to suggestibility. As Bernheim and Janet have shown and we explore in Chapter 1, suggestibility can occur without trance, and conversely, the trance state can exist without suggestibility. See Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 78.

[90] Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader, Affective Stylistics," *New Literary History* 2, no. 1 (Autumn 1970): 125.

[91] Indeed, it is important to distinguish between dissociation induced by hypnotic suggestion and preexisting dissociative disorders. See François Roustang, "Se dissocier : mais comment faire autrement?," *Hypnose et thérapies brèves* 7 (2007): 28-39.

[92] This is why this thesis does not focus extensively on the concept of hypnotic dissociation. Rather, it is centered on the notion of absorption which will be defined further on and contributes to the de-pathologizing of the hypnotic state.

attention. Depending on the way by which it is induced, hypnotic dissociation can be temporal, spatial, proprioceptive, between various body parts, aspects of the personality, and so on. The suspension of disbelief occurring in reading novels, for instance, involves dissociation away from the immediate surroundings of the reader, and association toward the fictional world. Attention can become fully immersed or move back and forth between both without losing its ability to distinguish between the real and imaginary worlds.

Absorption

As stated above, absorption—rather than dissociation—is the central concept used in this thesis to bridge the gap between the medical-therapeutic uses of hypnosis and its aesthetic aspects. Like "hypnosis" and "dissociation," the term has two senses which often become conflated and must be distinguished. First, it carries a nineteenth-century, pathologizing sense—as seen in representations of the daydreamer or monoideism—as well as a modern, naturalizing conception: we become absorbed regularly in various objects, both ordinary and aesthetic.

In my analysis of hypnotic and aesthetic absorption, I am greatly indebted to Ciarán Benson's concept of aesthetic "re-centering," developed in *The Absorbed Self*,[93] which defines aesthetic absorption as a dynamic process during which the self becomes other—without completely losing itself[94]—by temporarily immersing in its object of attention. According to Benson, "if there are different types of experiential field, and if there are different ways for self to be centered within such fields," aesthetic absorption is best understood, not as a simple obliteration of self or blind passivity, but as a "transition/transformation of one form of centeredness into another."[95] Like hypnosis, aesthetic experiences such as novel reading "alter the context of I" and invite it to "temporarily occupy" other points of view, which brings about aesthetic re-centering.

[93] Situating himself in the lineage of Richard Wollheim's attempt to "repsychologize" the theory of art, Benson's aim is to propose a psychology of aesthetic absorption informed by pragmatist aesthetics—namely those of Dewey, Pierce, and James—, social constructivism, and developmental psychology. Benson's highly valuable analysis is based on a constructivist, non-referential theory of the self. In this framework, "I" can be defined as a succession of changing plural points of view. As Benson notes, points of view—which are always limited and perspectival—are inherently relational, "always *on* or *about* something … constituted and sustained by interaction with the world … labile and mobile." Benson, 122. In this sense, no single abiding point of view can be said to exist. In this context, selfhood is constituted in relation to what is other than oneself, throughout the plurality of its points of view and objects.

[94] Indeed, during aesthetic absorption, there continues to be a "residual awareness" of myself as a spectator, listener or reader, "an awareness which is a central logical requirement for its being esthetic." Benson, 97. As we shall see in Chapter 3, without this implicit awareness of myself as observing, the distance necessary for aesthetic experience would not be possible.

[95] Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* xi.

Benson's account, in which aesthetic experiences "can be occasions for self-transcendence and therefore self-change" is valuable because it makes space for the ethical value of aesthetic absorption, which will occupy us in Chapter 4.[96]

Mimesis

The term "mimesis" will be used in two senses: aesthetic and hypnotic. While the former designates a notion of representation which can be traced back to antiquity and the distinction between mimesis and diegesis, the latter refers to the specifically hypnotic dimension underlined by historians of medicine, which originates with—and reinforces—a conception of the hypnotic subject as absent to him or herself, as a passive automaton.[97] It refers to the "blind" suggestibility of the hypnotic-hysteric subjects who imitate or reproduce symptoms and relive or mime pathogenic scenes—rather than remembering or narrating traumatic events *as past*. As I will argue, such mimetic conceptions of the hypnotic subject places them either in the category of the non-subject, or of the actor, trickster, and simulator. In this dissertation, it is my purpose to nuance such conceptions and underline on the contrary the strong aesthetic—and active—capabilities required to produce hypnotic phenomena, which are irreducible to pure imitation, illusion or deception, and are fundamentally linked to narrative, rather than merely dramatic-mimetic, ways of looking at the world.[98]

Imagination

Finally, as indicated by the main title, in this work, I intend on underlining the similarities between hypnosis and the novel by focusing on the notion of imagination. The imaginative faculty in question can be either that of the creator (the author, text, operator or suggestion), or of the recipient (the reader or hypnotic subject). Although the former comes into play in my analysis, I

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[96] Benson, 121.

[97] See Ruth Leys, *Trauma, a Genealogy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 2000); Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject* (Stanford: Sandford University Press, 1988) and *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Nidesh Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2013).

[98] See for instance Borch-Jacobsen: "Repeating *in statu nascendi* … is manifestly not remembering; it is not narrating, re-presenting a past event *as past;* it is … reliving the event with the intensity of the first time, by repeating it *in the present.*" As they relived or "mimed" the pathogenic scenes in the cathartic treatment, "hysterics did not remember anything, did not narrate anything: they relived and acted out roles, and this not on the mode of phantasmatic representation (*Vorstellung*) but on that of acting out (*Agieren*). … They *mimed* affects, body and soul," but Borch-Jacobsen, *Le Lien Affectif* (Paris: Aubier, 1991), 75-76, our translation.

will focus principally on the latter, that is, on the novel reader and hypnotic subject's similar activity of imaginative responding. In this context, I will use "imagination" to refer to the capacity to mentally create what is not-actual, either by the means of visual images (as in the mental imagery occurring in hypnosis)[99] or by non-visual (that is, verbal, internal-auditory or conceptual) cognitive means, as when one conceives of a scenario without the intervention of any visual imagery or imaginal material.[100]

Secondly, I will be mobilizing the imagination in the sense of the sympathetic or, as I will refer to it in Chapter 4, the "projective" imagination,[101] designating the faculty which allows the subject, both in novel reading and hypnosis, to relocate their center of experience by projecting it into other, imagined—fictional or real—lives. In this second sense, imagination is linked to the concepts of sympathy or fellow-feeling, as they was theorized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the German notion of *Einfühlung* (feeling into), which was introduced into English in 1909.[102] This double aspect of the imagination—sensory and sympathetic-—is at the heart of the aesthetic-immersive and ethical-projective similarities shared by hypnosis and the novel. Both involve a de-centering followed by a re-centering or relocation. The initial decentering corresponds to the aesthetic, immersive phase of entry into the fictional universe (opening the book, formally conducting a hypnosis induction), while the second phase (re-centering into other lives or possibilities for life) corresponds to the therapeutic-ethical potential opened up by the novelistic-hypnotic narratives.

iv. Reimagining Hypnosis

[99] For an anthropological-ethnographic review of practices of "cultivation of mental imagery," see Richard Noll, "Mental Imagery Cultivation as a Cultural Phenomenon," *Current Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (August-October 1985): 443-61.

[100] The fact that imagining is not an exclusively visual phenomenon is important both in hypnosis, -where hallucinatory experiences do not always involve visual hallucinations[100]-, and in novel reading -where the reader can "picture" the fictional world by becoming immersed in it and getting a "sense" or "feel" for the temporary "existence" of its objects, without this necessitating the production of detailed visual representations of this world and its objects.

[101] For the difference between the concept of projective identification in psychoanalysis and the projective imagination, see Chapter 4.

[102] See Eric Schliesser, *Sympathy: a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 286-322. See also Jeanne M. Britton, *Vicarious narratives: a literary history of sympathy, 1750-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). In this work, Britton shows how works of sentimental and gothic fiction published between 1750 and 1850 generate a "novelistic version" of Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments and sympathy, by shifting narrative perspectives, manipulating traditional narrative forms such as epistolary fiction or embedded tales and new publication practices.

As indicated previously, the primary goal of this thesis is to reconceptualize hypnosis through the lens of literary theory. While the history of hypnosis leading up to the invention of psychoanalysis has received considerable scholarly attention, the exploration of its relations with aesthetics, especially after the turn of the twentieth century and in relation to the novel, remains largely unexplored. Hypnosis frequently appears in cultural histories of the unconscious and of "psychological Modernism,"[103] as well as histories of psychiatry which tend to consider it as a pre-Freudian phenomenon, often restraining its function to a mere stepping stone on the way toward the emergence of the Freudian unconscious.[104] In this context, psychoanalysis is often taken to have put an end to the use of hypnosis as a means to explore unconscious mental processes, thereby implying that hypnosis ends where analysis starts off. Such a conclusion, however, overshadows the remaining parts of the history of hypnosis, which continues after the Second World War, as well as its independence, as an historical object, from the "birth of psychoanalysis." As Mark Micale observes in *The Mind of Modernism*, an "astonishing share" of the scholarship studying aesthetic and psychological modernism "continues to take the form of influence studies of psychoanalysis in which Freud—and occasionally Jung—are presented as the sole exemplars of psychological Modernism."[105] Far from espousing such a viewpoint, my study of hypnosis aims to shift attention away from "Freudocentric" accounts of the history of the unconscious and toward acknowledging the diversity of early dynamic psychiatry, both before and "around" Freud.[106]

Classic histories of hypnosis which focus on it as their sole object, such as those of Henri Ellenberger or Alan Gauld, propose valuable and detailed accounts of the emergence of hypnosis from the older, magnetic model, and its determining role in the birth of psychoanalysis.[107] Often

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[103] This term includes a cluster of disciplines, including psychiatry, neurology, psychology, psychoanalysis, the philosophy of mind and parapsychology. See Micale, *The Mind of Modernism*, 18.

[104] For instance, "the techniques of modern psychotherapy originated in large measure with the hypnotic and suggestive therapeutics of the 1880s and 1890s." Micale, Ibid., 12. See Andreas Mayer, *Sites of the Unconscious.* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), where hypnosis is considered as a dematerialization of magnetism, but also as a step on the way towards the immaterial and psychological psyche, inaugurated by Freud.

[105] Micale, Ibid, 7.

[106] Ibid., 7. Indeed, recent psychiatric historiography has established that, "for all of its eventual cultural influence, which was immense, psychoanalysis was only *one of many emerging models of mind* that comprised the coming of early dynamic psychiatry and that contributed to the constitution of the modern psychological self." Ibid., 7, emphasis added. As Micale argues, these "earlier Freudocentric accounts, which were typically written during the second and third quarters of the twentieth century by American and central European psychoanalyst-historians, now require revision." Conversely, "our understanding of freudianinsm as a historical formation" can be "greatly enriched by placing it in this larger contemporaneous intellectual environment." Ibid., 10.

[107] See Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York; Basic Books, 1970); Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud. Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological healing* (New Haven and

in the history of psychiatry, hypnotism is examined and conceptualized in close relation to the explosion of interest which centered on the formation of hysterical psychogenic physical symptoms at the end of the nineteenth century. Although highly valuable, these studies tend to lead to a confusion between hypnosis and the hysterical manifestations which characterized it during its *fin-de-siècle* heyday. This juxtaposition reinforces the pathologization of hypnosis by failing to center attention on its other, non-pathological aspects.[108] Applied to contemporary therapeutic practices, this results in systematically reducing hypnosis as a tool exclusively destined for use in trauma recovery, which tends to overshadow its numerous alternative potential uses.[109] In contrast, with this study, I wish to undertake a depathologized examination and history of hypnosis, which sheds light on the history of aesthetic absorption, shifting it from the pathological to the therapeutic and ethically valuable. Despite their highly valuable contributions, these historical studies, whether they center on hypnosis or mention it in passing, rarely place emphasis on the contemporary, post-twentieth century period. They tend to consider hypnosis as an historically circumscribed phenomenon, rather than a suggestive, affective process at the heart of all intersubjective relations, and fail to grasp the survival of hypnosis well after its "death" caused by the emergence of psychoanalysis.

This is not to say that I intend to set up a strong opposition between hypnotic and psychoanalytic models. Both historians and theoreticians of hypnosis often focus on the divergences between hypnotists and psychoanalysts. This divisive perspective can be found in histories of early psychoanalysis on the one hand, which locates the identity of the latter on the "death blow" with which the Freudian model detached itself from the murky waters of the hypnotic; but also in contemporary theories of hypnosis—especially those inspired by

London: Yale University Press, 2009); M. Tinterow, *Foundations of Hypnosis* (Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher, 1970).

[108] For the numerous, extensive histories of the complex relations between hypnosis and hysteria, see for example Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria, Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2003); Mark Micale, *Approaching Hysteria* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995) and *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880-1940* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004); Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) and *Making Minds and Madness, From Hysteria to Depression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Lilian Furst, *Before Freud, Hysteria and Hypnosis in Later Nineteenth-Century Psychiatric Cases* (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell, 2008); Sander Gilman, Helen King, Roy Porter, G. S. Rousseau, and Elaine Showalter, *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[109] See Ruth Leys, *Trauma, a Genealogy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

neuroscience and cognitive psychology—which define the hypnotic unconscious by systematically opposing it to the analytic unconscious. In both cases, the common ground between hypnosis and psychoanalysis is overlooked, which leads some thinkers not only to adopt anti-psychoanalysis stances, but also to eschew a "common grounds approach" and neglect the hypnotic dimension which, as I will argue in Chapter 1, can be thought to reside at the heart of all therapeutic relationships, including psychoanalysis.[110]

My contention is that one must take Mark Micale's invitation to "move beyond Freud" further, not only by examining dynamic psychotherapy in its broader context and all of its variety, but also by reconceptualizing hypnosis as a naturalized, non-pathological phenomenon, freeing it from "hysterocentric" accounts on the one hand—which overshadow its aesthetic, narrative, imaginative and therapeutic aspects—and from neighboring parapsychological practices on the other, which conflate it with the occult. Both of these approaches continue to dominate historians' main ways of apprehending it.

Literary histories which include hypnosis are often centered on the Victorian era and focus on the relations between hypnotism and spiritualism or the occult. These approaches also tend to restrict the practice to its *fin-de-siècle* cultural manifestations, and fail to seize the anti-mimetic dimension at its core, buying into, rather than unearthing, the narratives on which it was founded at the time.[111] Literary histories of the occult often include hypnosis among other parapsychological practices and group it together with its ancestor, magnetism, often under the label "mesmerism." The consequence is that the clear distinction between the "magnetists" of the early nineteenth century, and the "hypnotists" of the end of the century becomes blurred. The distinction between the earlier—materialists and fluidist—conceptions and the later, psychological, theories of hypnosis fails to appear clearly.

Similarly, literary studies of neighboring concepts—such as monoideism, sympathy, telepathy, dissociation, multiple personalities or possession[112]—usually seize upon just one aspect

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[110] See François Roustang. *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go,* trans. Ned Lukacher (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen. *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[111] See for example Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Albert Caillet, *Manuel bibliographique des sciences psychiques ou occultes*, 3 vol. (Paris: Librairie Lucien Dorbon, 1912); Churton Tobias, *Occult Paris: The Lost Magic of the Belle Époque* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2016).

[112] See for example Marina Van Zuylen, *Monomania: The Flight from Everyday Life in Literature and Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Lilian Furst, *Idioms of Distress: Psychosomatic Disorders in Medical and Imaginative Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Nicholas Royle, *Telepathy and*

of hypnosis, rather than grasping it in its entirety and technical specificity. Hypnosis in our sense runs across all these studies, but also extends beyond their scope. Furthermore, the central role of suggestion or autosuggestion as a naturalizing explanation for the whole spectrum of occultist phenomena and techniques is not always made apparent and often, hypnosis is dismissed as yet another form of occultism. By using the precise conceptual and technical vocabulary stemming from the medical literature and used by hypnotists themselves, my goal is to draw out the specificity of hypnotism as a psychological, rather than supernatural phenomenon, and to transpose this precision into the domain of literary studies.

As Micale argues, "the links between the arts and psychiatry are closer than those between the arts and any other branch of medicine; and arguably, in no period were they closer than during the turn of the last century."[113] A history of hypnosis at the intersection of medical and literary perspectives, which also puts it into dialogue with literary theory, can thus illuminate their respective blind spots and reveal their common aspects, bridging the gaps between literature and actuality, form and world, the textual and the psychological, the aesthetic and the therapeutic.[114]

When it is examined in aesthetic terms, hypnosis finds itself at the center of a cluster or web of genres, wherein each poses specific questions and problems of their own.[115] In relation to

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Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991); Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859–1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Jacqueline Carroy, *Les Personnalités doubles et multiples. Entre science et fiction* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993); Brigid Lowe, *Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy. An Alternative to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (London; New York; Delhi: Anthem Press 2007); Stefan Andriopoulos, *Possessed: Hypnotic Crimes, Corporate Fiction, and the Invention of Cinema* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2008).

[113] Micale, *The Mind of Modernism,* 2.

[114] See John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New-York: Minton, Balch and Co, 1934) and Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987). See also Micale's mention that aesthetic and medical Modernism both invent and center on the psychological, but that the *fin-de-siècle* was the last period where in Europe, physicians "routinely received both scientific and humanistic formations." Micale, 4. Indeed, as historian George Rousseau writes, it was not uncommon for Victorian and Edwardian doctors to "write prolifically throughout their careers: medical memoirs and autobiographies biographies of other doctors, social analyses of their own time, *imaginative literature of all types.* "See George Rousseau, "Literature and Medicine: Towards a Simultaneity of Theory and Practice," *Literature and Medicine* 5 (1986): 152-81.

[115] Despite their strong degree of overlap with hypnotic phenomena, in this study, I will *not* be proposing an anthropological examination of the therapeutics of trance states outside of Western history of medicine and psychiatry, such as meditation, trance and shamanic rituals. Neither will I be proposing psychoanalytic readings of literary texts to underline the common narrative dimension of novelistic texts and therapeutic change, as do Barbara and Richard Almond in *The Therapeutic Narrative. Fictional Relationships and the Process of Psychological Change* (1996) for instance. Rather, my scope of inquiry is situated at the intersection between hypnotic discourse and the aesthetic domain, both before and after Freud.

music, it raises questions about crowd psychology and the contagion of affect.[116] In relation to theater, it brings about doubts about authenticity, suspicion of artifice in the actor-subject.[117] In relation to the pictorial and visual arts, it poses the question of immersive illusion, of absorption and theatricality.[118] In relation to poetry, it awakens the ancient demons of the entrancement and intoxicating powers of *poiesis,* denounced by Plato, which I will address in Chapter 1. The examination of each genre in turn produces a new definition of hypnosis, the concept of which is in perpetual excess of all final categorization. As they do across history, the conceptions and manifestations of hypnosis mutate and are redefined depending on the object in relation to which it is examined.

In this thesis, I will draw out—and test out—an analogy between hypnotic states and the act of reading narrative literature. Unlike what would likely occur in a classic literary history of hypnotism, the latter is not examined as a mere object of aesthetic interest or representation, but as one of the structural components of all aesthetic experience. I will focus especially—but not exclusively—on the novel, a genre hitherto unexplored in relation to hypnosis, addressing a gap in the scholarship by elucidating the ubiquity of narrative concepts, structures and theoretic framework in contemporary psychotherapeutic settings.[119]

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[116] See our analysis of Du Maurier's *Trilby* in Chapter 2 and Nidesh Lawtoo's analysis of Nietzsche's relation to Wagner's "hypnotic" powers, in "Nietzsche's Mimetic Patho-logy," in *The Phantom of the Ego*, 27-84.

[117] See the debates between the Nancy and Salpêtrière schools of hypnosis and the question of hypnotic simulation explored in Chapter 1.

[118] See Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), and our analysis of Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* in Chapter 3.

[119] The history of hypnosis also helps reemphasize the early appearance of the relationship between therapeutics and self-narration, which the genre of the novel further participated in during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, a central characteristic of the psychodynamic therapeutics of the late nineteenth-century was their use of language as their main curative agent: of "the spoken word, (rather than, say, water, massage, electricity, drugs, or physical restraint)." Micale, *The Mind of Modernism,* 6. Hypnosis can be thought of as a "talking cure" in two senses. In older models, healing occurs with the direct suggestions, the spoken word, of the therapist. In modern, twentieth-century hypnotherapy and onward, healing occurs through the hypnotic re-narration of the patient's life-narrative. Although the therapeutic use of the spoken word can be traced back to Greed antiquity, during the 19th century, the subject of study, method of inquiry and case-historical style of psychiatry became "much more literary and narrative." Micale, 7. Affected by the emergence of dynamic models of mental functioning, the new case histories of the 1890s centered on the inner mental life of the patient, their story. Their new aim became representing individual emotional experience and intrapsychic subjectivity, a new goal which required new narrative strategies. Ibid., 6. After the patient tells their story during the clinical encounter, the therapist reworks it into a medical narrative "intended to convey a story of a single ever-changing mental personality of the time—a kind of psychiatric *Bildungsroman."* Ibid. This justifies the value of examining hypnosis in conjunction to the novel rather than poetic form—which resembles hypnotic trance but lacks the narrative dimension of hypnotherapeutic storytelling. For the origin of the therapeutic use of spoken language, see Pedro Laín Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity,* trans. L. J. Rather and John M. Sharp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

Indeed, the genre of poetry has been compared more frequently with hypnosis than has the novel, due to the rhythmic qualities and musicality of poetic form.[120] At the turn of the century, the French Surrealist movement famously celebrated the creative possibilities offered by hypnotic trance and automatic writing, unifying what the nineteenth-century medical discourse had clearly distinguished: madness, automatism and creative genius.[121] Despite its apparent fit for my purposes, in this study, I will not be focusing on this poetic aspect of the hypnosis-aesthetics interaction, for two reasons. First of all, the Surrealists' interest in hypnotism was not always clearly distinguished from magnetism and hysteria, which they famously celebrated for being the "greatest poetic discovery" of the nineteenth century.[122] Second, their strong focus on automatism and on the irrational dimension, on the mysterious depths of trance states, tends to pull hypnosis away from the naturalized, psychological, cognitive and narrative dimensions that I wish to examine here.[123] The Surrealists' poetic interest in hypnotic trance thus selects and illuminates a different aspect of the hypnotic object than those that are at stake in my study.

Both the hypnotic and the novelistic imagination lead to transformation or transcendence of the self, *in* and *through* redescriptions of the everyday, a process which is irreducible to mere escapism.[124] Examining hypnosis in light of narrative fiction is crucial because, like hypnosis, fiction can serve as an "extension" of our lives. As Wolfgang Iser notes, novelistic literature is able to "broaden" our reality, allowing the reader-participant to "see what he would not have seen in the course of his everyday life," to "grasp something which has hitherto never been real for

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[120] See for example Edward D. Snyder, *Hypnotic Poetry; A Study of Trance Inducing Technique in Certain Poems and its Literary Significance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930).

[121] See André Breton, *Les Manifestes Du Surréalisme, Suivis De Prolégoménes Manifeste Du Surréalisme Ou Non*. (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, 1947).

[122] See Louis Aragon and André Breton, "Le Cinquantenaire de l'hystérie (1878-1928)," *La Révolution surréaliste* 11, (1928): 20-22; André Breton and Philippe Soupault. *Les Champs Magnétiques* (Paris: Galimard, 1967). See also Frédéric Gros, *Création et Folie: Une histoire du jugement psychiatrique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), especially Chapter 3, "Écriture hystérique, écriture automatique."

[123] Alexandra Bacopoulos-Viau has shown, for example, how "by stripping his system of the 'marvelous' (*le merveilleux*), Janet removed from his theory "the potential for seeing in automatic manifestations of the mind a source of exalted creativity," which explains why Breton never publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to him, and in the end even considered Janet's a "sterile" science of the mind. See Alexandra Bacopoulos-Viau, "Automatism, Surrealism and the making of French psychopathology: the case of Pierre Janet," *History of Psychiatry* 23, no. 3 (2012): 260.

[124] By underlining the ethical value of hypnotic narrative, I hope to underline the narrow moralism of critics who accuse it of leading to delusion and dangerous entrancement. On the contrary, like good art (as defined by Iris Murdoch in Chapter 3), when used well, it can help dissolve denial and help the individual apprehend the see reality more clearly.

him," to "transcend the limitations of their own real-life situation."[125] Furthermore, like hypnotherapy, fiction allows us to test our moral values with "minimal cost to ourselves and others," to vicariously experience complex situations, emit judgments or acquire insights "without having to live in the situations which occasion them."[126] In this sense, both hypnosis and novelistic literature can be considered as therapeutic or moral laboratories in which the reader-subject can "take on, and explore, in a playful way and without the consequences this could have in real life, personalities and patterns of behavior that would be impossible or unsuitable in reality."[127]

Other critics have emphasized the value of fictional narrative in improving our actual lives in ways that bring it close to hypnosis. In *Empathy and the Novel,* for example, Suzanne Keen proposes that literary narratives have a stronger impact on the reader's empathetic responses because their very fictionality acts as a defense which releases readers from "obligations of self-protection through skepticism and suspicion," thereby disarming the layers of cautious reasoning which characterizes ordinary cognition.[128] It is because the very nature of fictionality "renders social contracts between people and personalize characters null and void" that it might allow us to internalize the experience of empathy in a way that "promises later real-world responsiveness to others' needs."[129] It is in a similar sense that hypnotherapy, by allowing the subject to experience "fictional" situations, can serve as a training ground for future action.[130] Just as the hypnotherapeutic setting strives to create a balance between immersion and emotional security, fictional representations, as Alison Denham shows in *Metaphor and Moral Experience,* allow us to engage with moral concerns in a manner which is "both suitably involved and suitably detached."[131] Like a successful hypnotherapy session, the reading of a novel stipulates that "we must be sufficiently involved to grasp what it would be like to occupy a certain point of view, but

[125] Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading; A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978),79.
[126] Novitz, in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature. An analytic Approach* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2008), 355-6.
[127] Werner Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," *Style* 38, no. 3, (Fall 2004): 342.
[128] Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2007), xiii; 28.
[129] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel,* 16; xiv
[130] Other critics concerned with the moral value of novelistic argue that fiction is a space in which the individual's self-interest can be suspended, giving way to more sensitive forms of attention. Martha Nussbaum argues that "because it is not our life," a novel places us in a moral position that is "favorable for perception," showing us "what it would be like to take up that position in life." See Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press 1990), 162. According to her, in novelistic prose, we find "love without possessiveness, attention without bias, involvement without panic," that is, emotional responses which are free from the excessive involvement and *amour propre* that would prevent us from taking into consideration the lives of others. Ibid., 162.
[131] Alison E. Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 339.

in doing so we are not yet so confined and committed … that we are unable to assess it from without."[132] Exploring moral and therapeutic aspects through fictional narratives therefore allows for more freedom and less constraints—physical, temporal, socio-economic, political and affective—than in our ordinary lives, providing access to experiences, both internal and external, which would otherwise remain out of reach.

By bringing these valuable ethical and therapeutic aspects of fictional narration to the forefront, a study of contemporary hypnosis and the novel—which extends beyond nineteenth-century gothic and Victorian literature—emphasizes the imaginative, active responses of hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity, redistributing "power" away from the author-operator, back towards the recipient's performance and aesthetic capacities. Furthermore, rather than track the parallel histories of hypnosis and its representations in the novel, my goal in this thesis is to examine how the history of the novel can shed light upon the history of hypnosis: both can be thought of in parallel, in the massive shift or transformation they underwent with the advent of modernism and, most importantly, the "end of realism" at the turn of the twentieth century.[133]

Whereas in most histories of hypnosis, the practice is said to undergo a crisis and "end" with the birth of psychoanalysis—which, in a sense, can also be thought of as the end of its "realist" period, that is, the period in which it remained unquestioned as a direct mode of access of the human psyche—my goal is to show that it did not disappear but rather, had to transform and adapted to what might constitute, following our analogy with the history of the novel, its twentieth and twenty-first century modernist and postmodern forms.[134]

As with the novel, the development of indirect hypnosis (especially in the Ericksonian branches) demonstrated a greater concern for formal and technical experimentation, and an increased focus on the role of the subject. In this context, hypnotic discourse began to make space

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[132] Ibid., 339.

[133] The "end of realism" is sometimes associated with the collapse of the Naturalist movement at the end of the 1887, and generally linked to the stylistic innovations of the novelists at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Michel Raimond, *La Crise du Roman. Des lendemains du Naturalisme aux années vingt* (Paris: José Corti, 1966), 67.

[134] Without taking this analogy too far, it could be argued that the "realist" period of hypnosis would correspond not only to the mid-nineteenth-century materialistic and fluidist conceptions linked to the magnetism paradigm, but also to the authoritative powers attributed to the operator in the hypnosis paradigm. In both cases, a "credulous view" is operative, in which the content of hypnotic material and representations is taken at face value, so to speak, and truth value is attributed to the images, memories and ideas that come up during hypnotic trance. See J. P. Sutcliffe, "'Credulous' and 'skeptical' views of hypnotic phenomena: A review of certain evidence and methodology," *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis,* 8 (1960): 73-101. Hypnotic "modernism," on the other hand, would begin after the Second World War, with the emergence of indirect, permissive models of hypnosis, in which the focus shifted from the material power of the operator to the linguistic potential of hypnotic utterances.

for anti-mimetic distance at the heart of the practice: subjects were allowed to drift in and out of trance, to self-reflectively comment upon their experience, without the "spell" of hypnosis being threatened or taken to be broken: the conventional, contractual, participatory and linguistic dimension of the practice became not merely explicit and acknowledged, but also strategically *used,* whereas in previous, nineteenth-century models, its technical—or formal—aspects remained concealed, in a process similar to the realist illusion. Like the modernist aesthetics of the twentieth-century novel, hypnotic form began to gain in flexibility, commenting upon its own workings, becoming self-reflective as it unfolds, no longer needing to cover its tracks or base its efficacy on the "power" of its creator.

Finally, as I will argue in Chapter 4, with the advent of postmodernist thought in the humanities and the narrative turn in psychotherapy, hypnosis, like the novel, also adapted to the "crisis in representation" and to skepticism about the very possibility of unearthing pathogenic memories, taking its own narrative turn. In this way, it further acknowledges its status as a complex practice of language games, a form of serious play whose medium is linguistic and whose efficacy lies in the subject's activity. Just as the genre of the novel does not disappear, but rather evolved, the practice of hypnosis does not vanish after the birth of psychoanalysis, but rather, adapts and finds new forms for itself.[135] In this sense, contemporary hypnosis as it is practiced today need no longer be confused with its nineteenth-century manifestations. On the contrary, it can be conceived as a narrative and linguistic practice which is compatible with the postmodern framework, considering itself as both "mere storytelling," and yet, as a serious form of play and meaning making. This isn't to say that hypnosis should be reduced to mere word play and endless chains of signification and distancing effects, but rather that its essence, like that of the novel, lies not in the magical power of its creator, but in the interaction of its medium and recipients. As I will argue in Chapter 3, the analogy between hypnosis and the act of reading, although it best applies to realist genres, can be carried into the discussion of modernist and postmodern texts—provided that we extend the term "hypnosis."

By extending the scope of my inquiry beyond mere representations of hypnosis in fiction, my aim is also to uncover the hypnotic structures and processes at the heart of the *activity* of

[135] See for example the dissemination of "Neurolinguistic Programming" in popular culture, which originated in Richard Bandler, John Grinder and Andreas Steve, *Frogs into Princes: Neuro Linguistic Programming* (London: Eden Grove Editions, 1990).

aesthetic creation and reception, especially in the immersive experience of reading narrative literature. Unlike histories of hypnosis which tend to neglect the anti-mimetic distance—the self-awareness and self-possessio— at the core of hypnotic phenomena, my analogy with the act of reading makes these apparent by bringing to the forefront the active capacities engaged by the subject. Although I frequently focus on the immersive power of realist aesthetics, as will be made clear in Chapters 3 and 4, my theoretical framework and literary corpus will also extend the analogy between hypnotic and novelistic imaginations to modernist and postmodern texts. In this way, preconceptions about both hypnosis and absorptive reading can be revised: just like hypnotic experiences are not restricted to hysterics but can occur in self-aware, self-possessed, non-pathologized subjects, conversely, immersive reading is compatible with non-realist literary texts and need not be confined to the nineteenth century novel.[136] Therefore, while this study follows Micale's intention of exploring the cultural affinities and "complex cultural interface" between aesthetic and psychological Modernism, it also goes beyond Modernism, extending the scope of inquiry to twentieth-and twenty-first century texts and literary theory, and subjecting my argument about the hypnotic nature of aesthetic experience to the test of anti-mimetic aesthetics, postmodern discourse and post-psychoanalysis therapeutic theory.

v. Layout of chapters.

In Chapter 1, I trace the history of hypnosis from Mesmer to Freud and beyond. This historical account emphasizes the historical evolution of the characteristics of trance states, which fluctuate in conjunction with fears and expectations of those who experience and induce them. As Anne Harrington notes:

> The understandings of hypnosis are not just changing over time. The mental and physiological *experience* of hypnosis—what it *is*—is changing too; and changing in ways that clearly reflect changing social expectations and mores.[137]

In the West, hypnotic trance states evolved from the initial Mesmeric "magnetic crisis"—considered by historians as a secularized form of demonic possession and religious exorcism[138]—

[136] As explained in Chapter 3, although I frequently focus on nineteenth-century realism, the examined corpus does not limit itself to a specific genre, the underlying hypothesis being that my analogy can also be applied to genres which seem to value formal experimentation over the aesthetic illusion and mimesis.
[137] Anne Harrington, *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine* (New York and London: Norton & Co., 2008), 22.
[138] As Harrington puts it, Mesmerism is the "partial secularization of the demonic possession narrative." Ibid., 26.

to the calm, peaceful states of somnambulism described by the Marquis de Puységur, and into the psychological state of hypnotism after its theorization by James Braid in the 1850s. Hypnotism in this sense is a dematerialization of previous models, that debunked Mesmer's cures as products "not of fraud but of the imagination."[139] During the "Golden Age" of hypnosis of the 1880s, trance phenomena blended with the pathological manifestations of the hysteric crises, before transforming once more into the calmer, more introspective and internalized states of absorption occurring within the safety and closed space of twentieth and twenty-first century therapeutic offices.[140]

In Chapter 2, I examine the literary representations of hypnosis in the nineteenth century and the ways in which they were not only influenced by, but also distortions of, the medical discourse of the time. The literary history of the naturalization and psychologization which lead from magnetism to hypnotism reveals how both popular and medical reactions to the practice evolved almost hand in hand, from fascination to anxiety and finally, scientific legitimacy, before the birth of psychoanalysis put an end to its heyday and the practiced seemed to disappear. The central tension inherent to nineteenth-century representations of hypnotism revolves around a constant alternation between materialist and spiritualist interpretations of the phenomenon. This alternation, as I argue, still haunts hypnosis to this day, in the debates opposing "state" and "non-state" approaches, "mimetic and "anti-mimetic" explanations of the nature of hypnosis.

In Chapter 3, I extend the scope of inquiry beyond the *fin-de-siècle* and explicitly formulate the analogy between the hypnotic state and the act of reading fictional literature. Moving from the historical to the aesthetic domain, I use Speech Act theory and contemporary literary criticism to examine the shared formal qualities of hypnotic and fictional utterances. Conversely, using the concept of illusion in a non-pejorative way, I reexamine the immersive, absorptive core at the heart of the aesthetic experience and novel reading. From this cross-comparison, both hypnosis and literary narratives can be described as forms of possible-world-creation, in which the nature of fictional participation lies in the interplay and dynamic back and forth between immersion and distance, mimesis and anti-mimesis. In doing so, I hope to clearly reconceptualize the experience

[139] Ibid., 26. For the dematerialization in the history of hypnosis, see Andreas Mayer, *Sites of the Unconscious* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
[140] Conversely, Martyn Lyons describes the 1890s as the "golden age of the book in the West." Lyons, "New Readers in the Nineteenth Century: Women, Children, Workers," in *A History of Reading in the West,* 313.

of the hypnotic subject as active, participatory, and creative rather than passive, purely mimetic, and receptive.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I turn to the therapeutic and ethical impact of fictional narratives—novelistic and hypnotic—on the reader. Arguing that hypnosis should not be reduced to a dramatic experience, I underline its narrative aspects by comparing hypnotic regression and futurization to metaphorical forms of storytelling, which transpose the ethical-imaginative capacity of "sympathetic imagining" from the novelistic to the therapeutic setting. This juxtaposition highlights the similarities between psychodynamic uses of hypnotherapy and psychoanalysis, once both practices are understood to share a common narrative orientation brought about by the narrative turn in psychotherapy. In this chapter, I use narrative ethics to argue that hypnotherapy and novels cultivate two ethical capacities in the recipient: "unselfing" or reorienting of the attention, and "decentering" or projective imagination, both of which allow individuals to think themselves into other lives, as well as the lives of others. Rather than impose dogmatic or paraphrasable content upon their recipients, both literary and therapeutic narratives teach us modes of self-transformation by gesturing towards new *ways of looking* at the world, which may then be transposed into actuality and participate in the individual's pursuit of the "good life." The conceptions of hypnosis in the discourse of Thomas Mann's narrator at the beginning of this introduction completely overlooks the tremendous aesthetic, therapeutic and moral value of hypnotic narratives, and fails to grasp their similarities with the literary text that formulates them.

Chapter 1. The History of Hypnotism: Dynamics of Separations and Continuities.

As a philosophical problem, hypnotism constitutes a mysterious *crossroads.* Regardless of its various theorizations, its observable effects systematically complicate the relations between the material and the spiritual, the somatic and the psychological, the conscious and the non-conscious, the active and the passive, the rational and the affective, the real and the imaginary. In each of its various historical manifestations, it destabilizes preexisting conceptions of such binaries, as well as the relations between the freedom and heteronomy of the subject. Although hypnosis is born from the interaction of all these factors listed above, proponents of opposing schools generally attempt to "pull" it toward one pole rather than another, struggling to settle the matter once and for all. Indeed, while the empirical efficacy of hypnosis was recognized very early on, the question of its cause—the nature of the hypnotic state—posed serious theoretical and practical challenges from the very beginning of its history. Indeed, a long-lasting debate about the nature and existence of the hypnotic state was born out of the findings of the 1784 Royal Commission. Chaired by Benjamin Franklin, the commission was appointed to investigate the nature of Franz Anton Mesmer's magnetic cure, and to determine whether the existence animal magnetism should be recognized or dismissed as a product of the imagination.[141] As I will argue in this chapter, the debates that stemmed from these late eighteenth-century investigations of animal magnetism, which posed considerable challenges to the emergent "experimental reason" of the time, have been replayed in various forms throughout the last two centuries and can still be found today, in the opposition between cognitive and social explanations of the nature of hypnotism.[142]

[141] The final commission that began its meeting in March 1784 was composed of five members from the Academy of sciences and four from the Faculty of Medicine—among whom, Benjamin Franklin, A. L. Lavoisier, and J. S. Bailly, a well-known astronomer of the time, who served as the secretary for it, and J. L. Guillotin.

[142] As Léon Chertock and Isabelle Stengers have shown, although experimental research on hypnosis has by now become a common phenomenon, "the controversies surrounding that research," are still unresolved, and "teach us less about hypnosis itself than about the *price* the experimental ideal requires a phenomenon to pay if it is to become an object of study." Chertock and Stengers, xi. Indeed, if suggestion—which "puts the 'truth' in question," problematizing the very possibility of constructing a theory "on the basis of experiment or experience"—permeates all human interaction, the laboratory setting is not exempt from its influence, especially when the observation of the

As it replays this debate in its various forms, the controversial history of hypnotism follows a gradual process of "dematerialization," which originates in Mesmer's animal magnetism—itself a naturalization of religious exorcism—and Puységur's magnetic sleep, both of which posited the material existence of a magnetic fluid.[143] It was only in the 1840s, when Scottish surgeon James Braid proposed his theory of *neurhypnotism,* that it began to be conceived as a psychological, rather than purely material, phenomenon. This paved the way for the *fin-de-siècle* heyday of hypnotism which thrived in France in the 1880s, in the competing Nancy and Salpêtrière schools, as well as the work of Pierre Janet. At this time, hypnosis, which was considered a serious scientific tool, mainly used to investigate the phenomenon of hysteria, played a seminal role in the theorization of a non-Freudian psychic unconscious. At the turn of the century, the emergence of psychoanalysis led to what is often thought of as the end of hypnotism. This "death blow" was caused by Freud's attempt to establish the scientific dimension of psychoanalytic theory by breaking away from the magical, regressive and dependency-generating aspects of its "primitive" parent, hypnosis. After examining which aspects of hypnosis *did* in fact "die" with this break, I will argue that unlike what is often assumed, hypnosis survived the birth of psychoanalysis and lives on, both as an autonomous practice and as the suggestive-affective phenomenon at the "heart" of all therapeutic relations. By retracing the history of hypnosis, from late eighteenth-century animal magnetism to twenty-first century hypnotherapy, I hope to bring to the fore the dynamics of continuities and separations that constantly reemerge under its various historical manifestations and account for the "fascinating" aura of mystery still associated with it to this day.

1.1. A Gradual Dematerialization

1.1.1. Immemorial Origins

In *Principles of Psychotherapy* (1924), Pierre Janet deplores that "today, the study of hypnotism is suffering an eclipse," an event which, as he notes, "has already happened several

subject's inner experience is involved. Just as the standards of "experimental reason" that the commissioners claimed to be applying were "anything but neutral," because of its very nature, the hypnotic state is difficult to constitute as an object of experimental study. Chertock and Stengers xvi, xi. For Chertock and Stengers, this explains why hypnosis has until now successfully eluded the "partition" of disciplines: "Neither biology nor psychology nor sociology has succeeded … in submitting hypnosis to its categories, that is, in ignoring the *remainder* overflowing [from] these categories." Chertock and Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason*, 204.

[143] See Andreas Mayer, *Sites of the Unconscious* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 75.

times."[144] Nevertheless, as he argues, interest in hypnotism will certainly "reappear under the same or under a related form, for it contains the germ of important therapies."[145] In this section, we will follow Janet's optimistic observation, assuming that this hypnotic "germ" can be found at the heart of a wide array of culturally and historically specific phenomena involving "modified" states of consciousness and suggestibility. Indeed, "trance" states exist in a variety of settings, ranging from religious and secular rituals to the phenomena of mass hysteria, from miraculous healing practices to those based the placebo effect, as well as in various absorptive, mystical and aesthetic experiences. While it is not in the scope of this project to turn to historical, anthropological or ethnological studies of trance practices, the brief overview which follows will shed light on the early origins of hypnosis. In this discussion, I will examine various states that can be considered as "ancestors" hypnotism, which undergo serious attacks whenever they appeared in cultural frameworks that value reason and knowledge over the passions—whether in Greek antiquity or France during the Enlightenment. I will begin by examining the case of Plato's *Ion*, where trancelike states of "inspiration" are used to explain the source of poetic discourse. Unlike the famous condemnation of the poets found in the *Republic*,[146] Plato's *Ion* conveys the mix of fascination and mistrust that carried on into later centuries and went on to characterize both artistic creation and hypnotic discourse in modernity.[147] Then, I will discuss the work of Franz Anton Mesmer, whom Henri Ellenberger describes as the "Columbus" of dynamic psychiatry, and ancestor of hypnosis.[148] Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism can be considered as the material origin from which hypnosis emerged later on, as a psychologized and dematerialized phenomenon. In both cases, the various fears and fascinations which surrounded these early origins of hypnosis are directly linked to its association with the irrational and the "primitive," to the threat which it seems to pose to the self-possessed subject of philosophical or scientific inquiry.[149]

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[144] Pierre Janet, *Principles of Psychotherapy,* trans. H. M. and E. R. Guthrie (New York: The Macmillan company,1924), 148.
[145] Ibid., 148.
[146] See Plato, *Republic,* 597e3–4, 6–7.
[147] Plato, *Ion,* in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), 1: 423-4. Plato's description of the rhapsode and divine inspiration can be considered as one of the theoretical origins of the suspicion and skepticism that became directed against both hypnosis and artistic creation in Western modernity.
[148] Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious,* 57. For Ellenberger, "the emergence of dynamic psychiatry can be traced to the year 1775, to a clash between the physician Mesmer and the exorcist Gassner." Ibid., 53.
[149] For example, Ellenberger opposes "primitive healing" to "scientific therapy" in his discussion of shamanic healing practices. Ibid., 47.

1.1.1.1. Poetic inspiration: Plato's metaphor

In the tradition of Western philosophy, aesthetic absorption—which as I argue, is a central component of the hypnotic experience—is often portrayed as an obstacle on the road towards knowledge and truth. Such fears can be traced back to Plato's attack on *poiesis,* in the context of the "ancient quarrel" between philosophy and poetry to which he refers in the *Republic*.[150] However, although Plato's opposition between philosophy and both rhetoric and poetry is developed in other dialogues—such as the *Phaedrus*, the *Gorgias,* and books II, III and X of the *Republic*—in the *Ion* (380 B.C.), the "hypnotic" power of artistic creator, interpreter and spectator alike is rendered through the use of what Kieran Murphy refers to as the "magnetotrope," and is therefore especially relevant to our purposes.[151] Indeed, in Plato's famous metaphor of the magnetic rings, the central anxieties stemming from the suggestive power of poetic discourse are crystallized in an image that blends together the forces of inspiration, magnetism and possession. Much like hypnosis, the mysterious power at the origin of poetic discourse is both admired and feared, as it seems to deprive the individual of his autonomy and cognitive capacities.

In the dialogue, Socrates' aim is to show Ion that the rhapsode and poet are not guided by rules of art, but by inspiration.[152] Indeed, lacking the *techne* that would provide them with adequate knowledge of the specialized art or skill of which they speak (*techne kai episteme*), neither Ion nor

[150] Plato, *Republic*, 607b5–6.

[151] In this thesis, the term "magnetotrope" refers to the metaphors and similes gravitating around magnetism, which are often transposed outside of the medical field, into to other areas of human existence. Kieran Murphy, who coined the term and considers it as a specific, nineteenth-century phenomenon, defines it as the "new magnetic trope that can be traced throughout the nineteenth century in the various magnetic analogies that evolved in discourses attempting to convey the nature of vital and cognitive force." See Kieran Murphy, "Electromagnetic Thought in Balzac, Villiers de Isle-Adam and Joseph Breuer," *SubStance* 40.2 (2011): 127.

[152] Ion is of course not a poet himself but a rhapsode, that is, both a reciter and exegete of Homer's text, claiming to be "able to speak about Homer better than any man." Although Socrates notes in the opening lines of the dialogue, that "no man can be a rhapsode who does not understand the meaning for the poet," he later on defines the rhapsode as "an interpreter of an interpreter," which recalls the famous description of the work of art as a mere copy of a copy, from the *Republic.* Plato, *Ion,* 530c; 535a.

Homer can, strictly speaking, claim to *know* what he is talking about.[153] Both poet and rhapsode, then, speak not from knowledge, but from divine inspiration.[154]

In Socrates' description, poetic inspiration is a state akin to madness, in which creators and interpreters are "not in their right mind."[155] Furthermore, possession and inspiration are the conditions for poetic creation: only when the poet—whether epic or lyric—is "out of his senses" and "the mind is no longer in him" can he compose his "beautiful poems."[156] However, the men who "utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness" are not the true speakers of these words; they are and "possessed" by the God who speak *through* them.[157] The same occurs in the case of the interpreter. When performing, Ion acknowledges that he is "besides himself" and admits: "at the tale of pity my eyes are filled with tears, and when I speak of horrors, my hair stands on end and my heart throbs."[158] Affect takes on an infectious quality, circulating freely and directly from Homer's "tale" to the rhapsode, and from the rhapsode to the spectator. Like the hypnotic subject in the midst of a hallucinatory experience, during his recitation, Ion's soul "seem[s] to be among the person or places of which [he] is speaking."[159]

To describe the manner in which divine inspiration affects and passes through the poets and their interpreters, Plato uses the image of a magnet to which several iron rings are suspended, which form a chain where each rings derives its power of attraction from the original divine "stone."[160] In this description, the magnet represents the original divine inspiration or Muse, whose influence then passes through its chain of "representants."[161] In this description, Socrates' vocabulary emphasizes the power of "attraction" of the magnet, its ability to "impart" and circulate

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[153] As Socrates playfully asks, "Are you also, Ion, the best general in Greece?" Plato, *Ion,* 541a. The topics that the rhapsode and poet speak of but to not fully know include war, human society, the gods and their intercourse with men, and so on. Furthermore, as Socrates observes, Ion speaks of Homer "without any art or knowledge" because "if [he] were able to speak of him by rules of art, you would have been able to speak of all other poets [that is, not only Homer]; for poetry is a whole." Ibid., 532c.

[154] "The gift which you possess of speaking excellently about Homer is not an art, but, as I was just saying, an inspiration; there is a divinity moving you"; "all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed." Ibid., 533e.

[155], Ibid., 534a.

[156] Ibid., 533d.

[157] Ibid., 534e.

[158] Ibid., 535c.

[159] Ibid., 535c.

[160] "The stone which Euripides calls a magnet . . . not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a similar power of attracting other rings; and sometimes you may see a number of pieces of iron and rings suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain: and all of them derive their power of suspension from the original stone." Ibid., 333e.

[161] "the spectator is the last of the rings which, as I am saying, receive the power of the original magnet. ... The rhapsode like yourself and the actor are intermediate links, and the poet himself is the first of them." Ibid., 535e.

its mysterious force through men, who simply "receive" and "take" in the inspiration. These images of conductivity and receptivity portray men as mere passive vessels for the divine.[162] Furthermore, this receptivity is transformed into dispossession, as God "*takes* away" the minds of poets and *"uses* them as his ministers."[163] This suggests the complete heteronomy of the possessed poet and rhapsode, which can also be felt in the physicality of the vocabulary used to convey the effects of inspiration on the recipient: "there is a divinity *movin*g you," "God *sways* the souls of men *in any direction* which he pleases," every poet is "*taken hold of.*"[164] In the order governing this great chain of dependence, where "one man hang[s] down from the other," the poet exerts the strongest influence in the human realm, as Socrates reminds Ion that "the greater number are possessed and held by Homer. Of whom, Ion, you are one, and are possessed by Homer."[165] Although he too is but a mere vessel, Homer thus appears as the greatest magnetizer of all, and Ion as one of his multiple "subjects." In this sense, the rings do not merely follow each other in a linear fashion. Rather, the magnetic relation is also one of subjection and subordination.[166]

Finally, Socrates reminds Ion of his own "hypnotic" powers. Indeed, his performance imposes similar effects (and affects) on most of the spectators.[167] Whereas he is initially reluctant to admit that he himself is mad during the performance, Ion ends up agreeing with this point: "I look down on them and behold the various emotions of pity, wonder, sternness stamped upon their countenances when I am speaking."[168] The consequences which emerge from this description of inspiration point to the dangerous effects of (dis)possession inflicted by *poiesis* onto the spectator, the "last of the rings" in the chain.[169] This turns the pedagogical potential of art into a threatening affective contamination spreading from the poet to the rhapsode or actor, to the public.[170]

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[162] Ibid., 533d-e.
[163] Ibid., 534d; emphasis added
[164] Ibid., 536a-c, emphasis added. This lexical field of physical possession and movement will run through numerous ulterior descriptions of magnetic sleep and hypnosis.
[165] Ibid., 536e.
[166] In the text it is also described as a "vast chain of dancers and masters and under-masters." Ibid., 536a.
[167] Ironically, the manner in which Ion acknowledges the truth of the Socratic analysis is not by making an explicit appeal to reason, but by admitting that his soul has been "touched" by the philosopher's words: "SOCRATES: Am I not right, Ion? ION: Yes, indeed, Socrates, I feel that you are; for your words touch my soul, and I am persuaded that good poets by a divine inspiration interpret the things of the Gods to us." Plato, *Ion,* 535a. The "poetic" or "literary" dimension of the platonic dialogues has been underlined by numerous critics, including Iris Murdoch, who in "Art and Eros" and "Above the Gods," even proposed her own attempt at writing philosophical dialogues in the platonic style. See Iris Murdoch, *Acastos: Two Platonic Dialogues* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1986).
[168] Plato, *Ion,* 535e.
[169] Ibid., 353e.
[170] Worth noting here is the contract between the role of affect in platonic descriptions of art and the notion of catharsis, both in its original Aristotelian formulation and in the work of Gotthold Lessing, as well as its medical reinterpretation

Paradoxically, despite the dangers of possession and loss of self, without state of inspiration is necessary for there to be any poetic creation at all. Indeed, without this dispossession, the production of poetic discourse cannot occur: "there is no invention in [the poet] until he has been inspired and is out of his senses. … When he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles."[171]

Furthermore, rather than unequivocally condemn and dismiss poetic discourse altogether, the *Ion* simultaneously hints at its value and beauty, when Socrates describes the poets as "sacred and winged" beings, who are able to draw "milk and honey" with their "beautiful" and "noble" words.[172] Despite its condemnation of poetic discourse as a diversion away from truth, the platonic image of the magnet thus also anticipates the ambivalence at the heart of nineteenth-century conceptions of magnetic somnambulism, by depicting the relations between magnetic attraction and an impalpable—yet real—force which acts upon the subject and seemingly grants him capacities that can't be attained in the "waking" state.

As they were reworked throughout history, Platonic anti-mimetic discourse and attacks on *poiesis* mainly reappear in arguments that focus on the dangers, rather than the value, of hypnotic "dispossession." Most of all, they can be found in late nineteenth-century conceptions of the hypnotic—and hysteric—subject as a simulator, to which we shall return further on in this chapter. However, as this initial ambiguity in the *Ion* indicates and as Ruth Leys has shown, although the history and theory of hypnotism oscillate between mimetic and anti-mimetic discourse, the practice encompasses both ends of the mimetic spectrum and cannot be pulled toward one side once and for all.[173]

1.1.1.2. The Therapeutics of Trance States

Despite this theoretical oscillation, on a practical level, the curative power of trance states was acknowledged very early on, remaining generally without controversy: although the question

by Jacob Bernays, and in Joseph Breuer and Freud's early work on hysteria. See Aristotle, *Poetics,* trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23; 92; Jacob Bernays, "On Catharsis: From Fundamentals of Aristotle's Lost Essay on the 'Effect of Tragedy'" (1857), *American Imago* 61, No. 3 (Fall 2004): 319-341; Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," (1893), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* ed. and trans. James Strachey, Vol. 2: 1-17 (London: Hogarth Press, 1961). Hereafter referred to as *SE.*

[171] Plato, *Ion,* 534b.

[172] Ibid., 534a.

[173] Leys, *Trauma,* 50.

of their causes remains unelucidated, that of their effects, or efficacy, is generally acknowledged and has been studies by historians and anthropologists alike, in a wide variety of modalities.[174]

Indeed, collective trances have been used as a curative tool for centuries and in this sense, situate the origins of hypnosis much earlier than the Mesmeric model. For instance, the use of hypnosis has been traced back by some historians to Ancient Egypt: "we have reports of shamans using hypnotism in Egypt more than 5, 000 years ago."[175] Similarly, the Greek and Roman cult of Asclepius—which flourished from the fourth century B. C. and lasted until early Christianity—has also been considered as a form of "practiced hypnotism."[176] Furthermore, trance states play a central role in shamanic possession rituals, which have been studied in a wide series of cultures, and rather than a "primitive" phenomenon, constitute—like hypnosis—highly complex, subtle, and codified practices which use absorption as a therapeutic tool.[177] In fact, Henri Ellenberger has emphasized the continuity between dynamic psychiatry and ancient shamanistic practices, arguing that the psychological and sociological framework in which the shamanic ritual has therapeutic efficacy is similar to that of the modern, Western therapeutic contract. Indeed, both depend on several conditions, namely: "1) the healer's faith in his own abilities, even if he knows that part of the technique depends on some kind of quackery. 2) The patient's faith in the healer's abilities … 3) the disease, the healing method and the healer must all be acknowledged by the social group."[178]

In this sense, an analogy can be drawn between the possession ritual and modern day "re-enactment of an initial pathogenic trauma," whether it appears in the psychoanalytic transference neurosis or in the context of an abreactive, cathartic treatment.[179] Ellenberger even compares the

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[174] See Ellenberger, *Discovery,* 3-52; Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The sorcerer and his magic," in *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

[175] George A. Agogino, "The Use of Hypnotism as an Ethnologic Research Technique," in *Plains Anthropologist* 10, no. 27 (1965): 32. One reference "tells of Techatoha-em-ankh, who performed hypnotism at the court of the pharaoh Khufu in 3766 B. C." Gibson, (1961), 17-18. The famous Harris papyrus, which was translated by Chalias in I860, presents a 5, 000 years-old account of another Egyptian hypnotist," Lapponi (1907), 6, in Agogino, Ibid.

[176] Agogino, "The use of Hypnotism as an Ethnologic Research Technique," 32. As Agogino explains in this passage, at specific cult centers, after being instructed in the healing power of the supernatural, patients were taken into the "hypnotic room" of the temple where "temple sleep" was induced "with hypnosis and auto-suggestion." Ibid.

[177] Possession rituals are found in the shamanistic practices of North African, Sub-Saharan, Tibetan, and Siberian cultures, among others. Jean Rouch's classic documentary, *Les Maîtres Fous*, which studies the possession ritual of the Hauka in Ghana—a ritual practice which appeared in the 1920s in reaction to British colonialism—emphasizes the complexity of such rituals, by showing how the Hauka ritual incorporates elements of the very urban modernity and imperialistic culture that it seems to reject. See *Les Maîtres Fous,* directed by Jean Rouch (1954, Paris: Éditions Montparnasse, 2005), DVD. For an analysis of Rouch's film and its relation to mimesis, see also Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routlege, 1992).

[178] Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious,* 12.

[179] Ibid., 12.

shamanic healing ritual to the cure of psychosis, in which the therapist strives to establish contact with the remaining healthy parts of the patient's psychotic mind:

> Could not the therapist who gives psychotherapy to a severely deteriorated schizophrenic patient … by trying to reconstruct the ego be considered the modern successor of those shamans who set to follow the track of the lost soul, trace it into the world of spirits, and fight against the malignant demons detaining it, and bring it back to the world of the living?[180]

Ellenberger also attributes religious mysticism, demonic possession and exorcism to trances states, produced by the unconscious autosuggestions of the individual or group. In this sense, trance states serve as the common denominator, the core principle of these various practices. At the end of the nineteenth century, this continuity was drawn out and reconceptualized by Charcot, who considered them as manifestations of hysteria, which became the new—pathologized—common denominator and emphasized the symptomatic, rather than potentially curative, dimension of trance.

1.1.2. Imponderable Materiality

Nevertheless, provided the scope of inquiry is restricted to Western modernity, the main origin of hypnosis is customarily associated with the work of Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815). As Ellenberger has shown in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, the whole field of psychological healing, as it is understood today, can be thought to begin with the discovery of magnetic sleep in 1784.[181] As we shall see, although it is the Marquis de Puységur who must be credited for this latter discovery, without the revolutionary implications of Mesmer's initial theory of animal magnetism, it never would have emerged. As Adam Crabtree has observed, by locating the ancestry of modern psychology in the invention of magnetism, Ellenberger's pioneering work introduced an alternative historical ancestor for dynamic psychiatry, claiming that "all modern psychological systems that accept the notion of dynamic unconscious mental activity must trace their roots, not to Freud, but to those animal-magnetic practitioners who preceded him by a century."[182]

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[180] Ibid., 9. Nevertheless, this comparison with schizophrenia tends to pathologize, rather than naturalize the shamanic trance, and implicitly suggests an analogy between the hypnotic and psychotic states, which I would like to deconstruct in this thesis.
[181] Ellenberger, *Discovery,* 57-69.
[182] Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud. Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological healing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), vii.

Despite its foundational dimension however, Mesmer's "discovery" of animal magnetism is often remembered as a pseudo-scientific hypothesis that bordered on charlatanry and that, despite its popularity, never received the institutional recognition from the medical field that its author fervently hoped for. Indeed, as Ellenberger observes, although "both Columbus and Mesmer discovered a new world, both remained in error for the remainder of their lives about the real nature of their discoveries, and both dies bitterly disappointed men."[183] However, despite its lack of official recognition, Mesmer's model was highly valuable in two respects.

First of all, it reached an astounding degree of popular success in the 1780s by providing a mysterious, yet purportedly scientific way of curing patients, regardless of whether they belonged to the lower class or to the aristocracy, just a few years before the French Revolution.[184] In addition to this potential threat posed to Ancien Régime social stratification, the Mesmeric model created a pivotal shift, away from older "intrusion paradigms"—which still explained pathology from without, by the interventions of spirits, demons or sorcerers—to an "organic paradigm," which reduced disease to a series of internal, physiological dysfunctions.[185] Crucially, according to Adam Crabtree, Mesmer's work also planted the seeds of the "alternate-consciousness paradigm," which would emerge almost a century later, once Mesmer's materialism had been dismissed and the intrapsychic causes of mental disturbance established. In this sense, Mesmer's work, despite its colorful exuberance, paved the way for the discovery of the unconscious, and ulterior accounts of the influence "of unconscious mental activity as the source of unaccountable thoughts or impulses."[186]

1.1.2.1. Franz Anton Mesmer. The Primal Ancestor.

A Materialist Perspective

The initial elements of Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism appeared in 1766, when—after beginning a course in law at the University of Vienna in 1759 and switching to medicine one year later—he completed his doctoral thesis, *Dissertatio physico-medica de planetarum influxu.*[187] As Frank Pattie has shown, Mesmer's thesis relied heavily on Richard Mead's 1704 *De imperil*

[183] Ellenberger, 57.
[184] Mesmer arrived in Paris in February 1778.
[185] Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud,* vii.
[186] Ibid., vii.
[187] Franz Anton Mesmer, *Dissertatio physico-medica de planetarum influx* (Vienna: Ghelen, 1766).

solis ac lunae, according to which there are tides in the atmosphere and the human body, which are similar to ocean tides, but emanate from the stars.[188] This initial conception of a generalized influence of celestial bodies on the human organism first took on the label of "animal gravity" in Mesmer's work. It is worth pointing out that this notion was constructed on the trope of musical harmony and resonance,[189] which helped conceptualize the influence of one plane on another, and suggested, before the final formulation of the theory of animal magnetism, the existence and subtlety of invisible yet "real" influences, which were not exclusively thought on the mode of the pathological. Indeed, as Mesmer writes:

> One must not think that the influence of the stars on us only has to do with diseases. The harmony established between the astral plane and the human plane ought to be admired as much as the ineffable effect of universal gravitation by which our bodies are harmonized, not in a uniform and monotonous manner, but as a musical instrument furnished with several strings, the exact tone resonates which is in unison with a given tone.[190]

Alongside with the invisible forces such as planetary motion, gravitation, centrifugal force, and later on, mineral magnetism, here the emphasis on the power of music contributes to a general worldview in which the invisible is not opposed to empirical efficacy, but on the contrary is endowed with properties and effects capable of acting on material bodies.[191] This subtle influence, which Mesmer considered as "the very foundation of life itself, the principle by which organic bodies carry out their vital functions," was then reworked nine years later into the concept of "magnetic fluid," which shifted the lexical field away from the musical and toward the magnetic.

As it is now widely known, for Mesmer, the inhibition of this vital force or fluid is responsible for creating pathological disorders and diseases in the subject. The shift from the gravitational to the magnetic was the outcome of Mesmer's 1774 experimentations with magnets, especially those he conducted on his patient Francisca (Franzl) Oesterlin.[192] As Mesmer observed, the application of magnets on Franzl's body, after a violent initial reaction, produced a relief of

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[188] Frank Pattie, "Mesmer's medical dissertation and its debt to Mead's Imperio Solis ac Lunae," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 11, no. 3 (1956): 278.

[189] In the 1760s while he will still in Vienna, Mesmer established a solid friendship with the Mozart family. Later on, he himself played the glass harmonica around the *baquet*, maintaining the esthetic and therapeutic dimension of his love of music intertwined in his medical practice, both Viennese and Parisian.

[190] Mesmer, *Schreiben über die Magnetkur von Herrn Dr. A. Mesmer,* trans. George Bloch, in *Mesmerism: A translation of the Original Scientific and Medical Writings of F. A. Mesmer* (Los Altos, CA: William Kaufman, 1980), 14; 19.

[191] The invisible or imponderable is thus not to be confused with the imperceptible or the impotent.

[192] Mesmer became interested in the curative properties of magnets in June 1774, when he heard of Maximillian Hell—a Jesuit priest—'s experiments involving the cure of stomach cramps with the use of an iron magnet. He then had Hell make the magnets which he used in his treatment of Franzl.

symptoms which lasted for several hours.[193] For Gassner, the crisis was taken to be the evidence of possession, as well as the first step in the procedure of exorcism.[194] Perceiving "currents of force that moved through Franzl's body" while the magnets were in place, Mesmer believed to have discovered the empirical existence of animal gravity, as well as the means to control and use this natural force to reestablish the patient's health.[195] However, at this time, the curative properties of the magnet were still attributed to Maximilian Hell's original discovery, and the healing power was attributed to the material object itself. In his 1775 "Letter on Magnetic treatment," Mesmer therefore tried to shift the focus back toward the operator's ability to manipulate the force, arguing that the magnet should not be considered as a cause or a curative agent in itself: "Steel is not the only substance that may be used to receive magnetic power. I have been able to magnetize paper, bread, wool, silk, leather, stone, glass, water, various metals, wood, men, dogs—*everything that I touch*. And these magnetized objects have produced the same effects on patients as have magnets themselves."[196] Rather than to the magnetized object—which is interchangeable and thus insignificant—the cause of the cure should be attributed to the magnetizer's ability to channel, direct, and project the force that restores equilibrium in the magnetic "tides" of the body—the latter being the main magnet. Once clearly separated from mineral magnetism, Mesmer's healing technique therefore "placed the physician and his body at the center of the cure," as both catalyst and curative agent.[197]

While as we noted higher up, Mesmer's insisted on the non-pathological dimension of the magnetic currents circulating throughout material bodies, the ability to be magnetized—later on theorized as hypnotic receptivity—is linked to the pathological from the start. Indeed, the magnetic crisis serves to correct the blockages and imbalance in the suffering patient. Magnetism affects the body only when its natural harmony has been disturbed by illness. Although the fluid in itself is not linked to pathology, its obstruction and bad circulation, which are the *conditions* for the magnetic crisis to occur, are. Sensitivity to magnetism then diminishes when the state of health

[193] This initially violent reaction was then presented as the beneficial "magnetic crisis" which was thought to restore balance in the patient's body.
[194] Ellenberger, 63.
[195] Crabtree, 6.
[196] Mesmer, "Letter on Magnetic Treatment," 1775, in Tischner and Bittel, *Mesmer unt sein Problem,* (Stuttgart: Hippokrates Verlag, Marquart & Cie, 1941), 38, emphasis added. Here, Mesmer's insistence on the physician's touch recalls the powers of "healers of old" who, like the king of France, would "lay hands on the ill" and perform miraculous cures. See Crabtree, 7.
[197] Crabtree, 7.

has been restored, just as later on, nineteenth-century theorists argued that hypnosis could not be induced in healthy patients. As we shall see further down, the "mesmeric crisis" and its violent convulsions reappeared one century later in Charcot's theory of *grand hypnotisme* and in late nineteenth-century pathologizing assimilation of hypnotism to hysteria. The infectious dimension of the magnetic crisis was especially feared and felt by the 1784 Royal commissioners and observers of Mesmer's work, who noted the erotically charged and affectively contagious, collective dimension of the mesmeric crisis.[198]

By attributing the power of animal magnetism to the operator rather than the bodies—mineral or animal—through which it passes, Mesmer unknowingly inaugurated the long-lasting tradition in which hypnotic efficacy is taken away from the subject and placed in the hands of the all-powerful physician:

> When he would point his index finger at her, even though from some distance, she would actually fall senseless to the ground—and this would occur even when he was standing behind two closed doors or a wall. The same thing would happen when he would press on her image in a mirror or hold up a mirror to her. A similar effect was produced when he sprinkled a drop of water from his hand.[199]

Setting aside the theatrical and symbolic dimension of magnetizer's authoritative gestures and their implications for the future of the therapeutic relation—pointing a commanding finger, forcing the subject to face her own reflection, sprinkling not holy, but magnetized water from above, and so on—here, one can note the dual nature of the magnetic fluid, which is both material, and yet seems to transcend the laws governing ordinary material objects.[200] Conveniently, its secrets lie in the hands of the individual capable of mastering the fluid, which seems not only to defy the laws of nature and "ponderable" objects, but also to be impossible to measure or quantify. In this sense, despite Mesmer's insistence on its material dimension, an "experimental" study of the magnetic fluid seems especially difficult to conduct. This is especially the case as the technique varies depending on the patient in question, lacking the objective criteria and repeatable, systematic

[198] "Sometimes a crisis ignited in one patient induced similar crises in others in the group. A special room was set aside for those who were overtaken by convulsions or other violent forms of crises in an attempt to control this kind of psychic contagion" Ibid. 14.

[199] Mesmer, *Schreiben über die Magnetkur*, Appendix, 36, in Crabtree, 8. This passage refers to the early case of a sixteen-year-old girl suffering from arthritis and epilepsy whom Mesmer treated near Constance in the summer of 1775.

[200] Indeed, it can be projected from a distance or behind closed doors, its efficacy does not seem to depend on the quantity of magnetic water, magnetic passes can be carried out on mirror reflections rather than on the actual body of the patient, etc.

procedures of orthodox medical treatment.[201] Directed at will but only by the physician, not dependent upon physical contact, difficult to understand and observe, its unpredictable character makes it an unsuitable candidate as a serious scientific discipline.[202] Rather, its curative powers depend on a leap of faith of sorts, in which one can either submit oneself to the esoteric knowledge of the magnetizer without question, or dismiss the practice as unscientific—which ultimately led the 1784 Royal Commission appointed by the king of France to their final verdict.

Science or Charlatanism?

In his attempts to distinguish it from the occultism linked to the thaumaturgical powers of ancient miracle workers—and despite his reputation in Europe as somewhat of a "wonder doctor"[203]—Mesmer insisted that his therapeutic technique, being endowed with the seriousness of physics, called for a broad scientific experimentation that would verify its laws and grant it official recognition. In this sense, it is no surprise that he emitted the opinion that Father Johann Joseph Gassner, the well-known exorcist who had visited the Lake Constance region one year before him and "demonstrated a striking ability to heal the sick," was mistaken on the nature and cause of the phenomena operating in the "cures" he performed with his wooden crucifix.[204] With his conception of disease as possession and exorcism as cure, Gassner can also be considered as a main ancestors of suggestive therapeutics, albeit clothed in religious language. Indeed, when facing an ill patient, Gassner would first determine whether the cause of the disease was organic or due to demonic possession, by a striking use of suggestion: invoking Jesus in Latin, he would command that "if the disease be of supernatural origin, the pain of it should increase."[205] If nothing happened, he considered the illness to be natural and sent the patient to a doctor. As Ellenberger observes, "in that manner, he felt his position to be impeccable, both from the viewpoint of Catholic orthodoxy and from that of medicine."[206] However, if the patient's condition worsened,

[201] "At present, Herr Doctor Mesmer makes most of his cures without any artificial magnets. Rather he carries them our purely by repeatedly touching the ill part of the body, *sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, as circumstances demand."* Mesmer, *Schreiben über die Magnetkur* Appendix, 13. This empirical need to vary the technique according to the "demands of circumstance" was one of the key problematic elements that led to the Commission's condemnation of animal magnetism.

[202] Similarly, later on the unpredictable results of suggestive therapeutics would be used as an argument against the curative value of hypnotic suggestions.

[203] Crabtree, 7.

[204] Ibid., 8. Ellenberger describes Gassner as "one of the most famous healers of all time." Ellenberger, 53.

[205] Crabtree, 8.

[206] Ellenberger, 55.

he would then proceed on to exorcism. As the Catholic clergy was divided on the nature of Gassner's cures, in 1775 Mesmer was invited to Meersburg and observe Gassner at work, at the instigation of Maximilian Joseph III. The Munich Academy of Science then invited Mesmer to Munich to give his opinion about the priest's healing method. Mesmer concluded that although the cures were genuine, they were explainable by animal magnetism. In his view, Gassner was honest but deluded: the true source of the cures he produced was "the healing power of nature itself."[207] Therefore, Mesmer's encounter with Gassner served two purposes. First, it strengthened his own conviction that animal magnetism operates most powerfully and effectively through the organism of the physician," the physician's body being the best means to augment and control animal magnetism. Second, it reinforced the general framework with which Mesmer's theory imposed a naturalization and secularization of previous occultism or religious explanations of pathology.[208]

Nevertheless, despite his popular success and the trust he seemed to earn from religious authorities, Mesmer never obtained approval from the institutional medical authorities. When he arrived in Paris in February 1778, Mesmer he had a thriving practice, performing both individual and collective treatment—centered around the famous *baquet*.[209] Although he yearned for support from of the orthodox medical establishment of Paris, "acceptance by medical men of stature eluded him."[210] When his hearing at the Academy of Sciences did not lead to recognition, he turned to the Société Royale de Médecine de Paris (founded in 1778 in competition with the Faculté de Médecine de Paris), which proved to be a failure also. Then after having sparked Delson's enthusiasm in 1779, he presented a memoire to interesting physicians of the Faculté de Médecine, published eventually as the famous *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal,* summarizing the theory and tracing the history of his practice and discovery of it. In his now radically materialist theory of animal magnetism, Mesmer strived to distinguish his curative technique from the occultism linked to the powers of ancient miracle workers, and understood it as being endowed with the seriousness of physics, calling for broad scientific experimentation to

[207] Crabtree, 9.
[208] Ibid. 9.
[209] The *baquet* cure refers to when Mesmer began incorporating curative baths into his technique, around 1775. Patients would sit around the *baquet,* which was filled with magnetized water, and either held hands or onto magnetic rods which would conduct the magnetic current into their bodies.
[210] Crabtree, 12.

verify its laws and functioning. In the *Mémoire,* twenty-seven propositions summarize the theory of animal magnetism as it was theorized and passed on to his disciples:

> 1) There exists a mutual influence between the celestial bodies, the earth and animate bodies; 2) The means of this influence is a fluid that is universally distributed and continuous … capable of receiving, propagating, and communicating all impressions of movement; 3) This reciprocal action governed by mechanical laws as yet unknown… 8) the animal body experiences the alternate effects of this agent which insinuates them into the nerves 9) It particularly manifests itself in the human body by properties analogous to the magnet … 10) I decided to call it "animal magnetism" … 23) The facts will show, following the practical rules that I will establish, that this principle can heal disorders of the nerves immediately and other disorders mediately.[211]

After the Royal commissioners' report however, animal magnetism was officially condemned as being a product of imitation, touch and the imagination.[212] As its secretary, J. S. Bailly, observed in the 1784 report:

> The commissioners, especially the physicians, made numerous experiments on different subjects, who, they themselves magnetized or whom they got to believe themselves to be magnetized. … In all of these experiments no differences were found other than those due to a varying degree of imagination. They are therefore convinced by the facts that the imagination by itself can produce the different sensations and cause the feelings of discomfort or heat … and have concluded that it necessarily enters strongly into the effects attributed to animal magnetism.[213]

In another, secret report addressed to Louis XVI—published much later, in 1800—it animal magnetism was further condemned for its morally subversive dimension, especially regarding the question of the higher susceptibility attributed to women, who were thought to be more likely to succumb to the influence of the magnetizer and demonstrated signs of worryingly erotic behavior during the magnetic crisis.[214] The fear of contagiousness of the magnetic crisis was thus strongly linked to the moral dangers associated with its observable characteristics, which reemerged in nineteenth-century explanations of hysteria and the pathologizing eroticization of the *crise d'hystérie.*[215]

Rejected by orthodox medicine and engaged in deep conflict with most of his disciples, Mesmer ended his career on a disappointed note[216] He left Paris in 1785 and, after wandering

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[211] Mesmer, *Mémoire sur la découverte du Magnétisme animal* (Paris: Didot le jeune, 1779), 74-83.
[212] Jean-Sylvain Bailly, *Rapport des commissaires chargés par le roi de l'examen du Magnétisme animal* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1784), 72-73.
[213] Bailly, *Rapport des commissaires*, 39-41.
[214] See Crabtree, 89-105.
[215] For instance, in Charcot patients, "many of the movements and poses of the [hysterical] crises were erotic in appearance and for some patients involved overt sexual pleasure." Crabtree, 166. Stimulation of the "hysterogenic" points or zones—insensitive areas of the patient's body, close to the ovaries or the breasts, could induce or arrest an attack.
[216] In particular, his conflict with Nicolas Delson—sometimes spelled D'Elson—was due to Mesmer's "paranoiac delusions of grandeur," his rigid insistence on keeping his technique secret and his numerous attempts to exercise sole proprietorship over his technique. Although he constantly reiterated his loyalty to Mesmer, Puységur's elaboration of

around Austria, Switzerland and Germany for twenty-years, moved to Meersburg on lake Constance in 1793, where spent the rest of his life away from the public eye.

Despite the 1784 condemnation, Mesmer's disappearance and the upheaval caused by the French Revolution, the fascination for magnetism remained unscathed during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in the provinces. Present in popular culture, medical and legal texts, as well as in the performances of stage magnetists, its various practices and theoretical branches permeated the first half of the century, often crossing boundaries from one domain to another. As the century progressed, the theorization of magnetism moved towards a growingly immaterial and psychological explanation of the original material fluid, shifting the focus towards the activity of the subject, and the faculties of the human psyche such as the will and the imagination, which the Royal Commission was the first to officially invoke in its explanation of the effects of magnetism.

1.1.2.2. The Marquis de Puységur: Cutting the Cord

One central turning point in this progression was the discovery of "magnetic sleep" by Mesmer's disciple, Armand Marie Jacques de Chastenet de Puységur (1751-1825), who is considered to have "stumbled across the phenomenon that would radically alter psychological thinking in the western world" and thereby "gave birth to the alternate-consciousness paradigm."[217] Although Puységur remained faithful to Mesmer throughout his life, the discoveries which emerged from his practical experiments with magnetism led to one of the most important breaks with the mesmeric model and the emergence of the new concept of somnambulism.

A Peaceful Sleep.

In his 1784, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et au rétablissement du magnétisme animal,* Puységur describes that his discovery of magnetic sleep occurred accidentally by inducing it in

the theory of magnetic sleep was experienced as a strong betrayal from one of his most loyal followers. See Ellenberger, 67-69.

[217] Crabtree, viii. Pierre Janet is usually considered as the main theorist with whom the dual consciousness paradigm emerged, in the 1880s. For Crabtree however, the characteristics of magnetic somnambulism described by Puységur in 1811 (that is, *isolation,* where the subject is cut off from people and objects around him and in strong rapport with the magnetist; *concentration*, an "inner preoccupation … of such intensity that [the subject] cannot be distracted from it" and *magnetic mobility*, where he subject is subjected to the thoughts of the operator in a direct and compelling way), to some degree, "foreshadow the much later discussion of the nature of psychological dissociation." Crabtree, 312-3.

Victor Race, a twenty-three-year-old peasant from his estate, in an attempt at classic magnetism. Unlike the spectacular crisis of Mesmer's patients, however, Victor "spoke, occupying himself out loud with his affairs. When I realized his ideas might affect him disagreeably, I stopped them and tried to inspire more pleasant ones. He then became calm . . . The next day, no longer remembering my visit of the evening before, he told me how much better he felt."[218] This emphasis on the subject's activity—which includes speech, movement, amnesia, and most importantly, "calm"—marks the beginning of a shift away from the Mesmeric model. Indeed, while Mesmer held that the violent convulsive crisis was necessary for magnetism and healing, Puységur both observed in Victor and advocated for, this gentle crisis.[219] For him, Mesmer's *crisis room*[220] "ought rather to be called a 'hell of convulsions' and ought never to have existed ... It is a pity that such an unfortunate practice has resulted from what was originally dictated by humane concern."[221] Puységur therefore inaugurated a new, gentler, conception of the magnetic state. For him, the true crisis is "the calm and tranquil state which, to the onlooker, reveals a picture of well-being and the peaceful work of nature effecting a return to health."[222] This redescription is a striking advance, which was later on overshadowed by the Charcotian model, in which the trance state can be distinguished from the violence of pathology and the unnatural. In Puységur's conception, magnetic somnambulism is founded on the analogy with natural somnambulism: although the former is artificially induced, both states "involve a sleep of the exterior senses" and a disregard of the exterior environment.[223] However, this does not mean that the subject has fallen unconscious in the sense of a complete lack of awareness. Rather, "if [the subject] is aware of everything around him, he is not completely in the magnetic state. This state of demi-crisis is very common."[224] In

[218] Puységur, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et à l'établissement du magnétisme animal* (Paris: Dentu, 1784), 28-29.
[219] Ibid., 22.
[220] Mesmer had to use a separate room devoted to collective crises as he lacked sufficient time to devote to all patients individually. This practice of grouping together patients undergoing the crisis at the same time was later on taken up by various followers.
[221] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 97.
[222] Ibid., 97-99.
[223] Puységur, *Recherches, expériences et observations physiologiques sur l'homme dans l'état de somnambulisme naturel et dans le somnambulisme provoqué par l'acte magnétique* (Paris: J. G. Dentu, 1811), 76.
[224] Puységur, *Du Magnétisme animal, considéré dans ses rapports avec diverses branches de la physique générale,* (Paris: Dentu, 1820)*,* 161-169. Similarly, Bernheim would later argue that depth of trance is not necessary for therapeutic success, and that a state of light trance can just as well lead to the successful implementation of a suggestion.

this sense, magnetic sleep resembles a calm, concentrated state of absorption, during which the relation between the subject ang magnetist is especially strong.

Indeed, one of the key elements introduced by Puységur's technique is that the induction of magnetic somnambulism results in the *rapport* between operator and subject (often compared to the mother-child relation in later theories[225]): "in this state, the ill person enters into a very intimate rapport with the magnetizer, one could almost say becomes a part of the magnetizer."[226] As Adam Crabtree has observed, Puységur conceived this becoming part of the magnetizer "quite literally," explaining that "the magnetizer can cause the magnetized to perform specific actions by a simple act of will: "the magnetized person, he believed, is *functionally inseparable from the magnetizer*."[227] The connection is so intimate that its description includes parapsychological elements, such as thought transference or telepathy: "I do not need to speak to him. I think in his presence, and he hears me and answers me. ... When he wants to say more than I believe prudent for the listener, I stop his ideas, his sentences in the middle of a word and totally change his thought."[228] The Somnambule is therefore "subordinated" to the magnetist, who not only leads him to perform a given action by a mere act of will, but can also instantly perceive, control and modify his very thoughts.[229] Significantly, in this conception, rapport is transferable.[230] Indeed, although the subject finds the approach of anyone else than the magnetizer very uncomfortable, the operator also has the power to "pass on this rapport" to others, thereby transferring the connection.[231] In this way, the hypnotic relation—still theorized as magnetic rapport—circulates freely among individuals, which implicitly reinforces the idea of an objective phenomenon acting upon the subject, regardless of who is administering it.

By using the Mesmeric concept of a "sixth sense,"[232] Puységur then distinguished four important therapeutic activities linked to the phenomenon of clairvoyance that could be achieved

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[225] See for example Jean- Luc Nancy, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Eric Michaud, *Hypnoses* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1984); and from an analytic perspective, Sándor Ferenczi, "The Principle of Relaxation and Neocatharsis," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 11 (1930): 428-443.
[226] Puységur, *Suite des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et à l'établissement du magnétisme animal* (Paris and London: N.p. 1785), 17.
[227] Crabtree, 41, emphasis added.
[228] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 35-36.
[229] Puységur, *Recherches, expériences et observations*, 83.
[230] Just as hysterical symptoms would be later on in Charcot's theory.
[231] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 205; 206.
[232] "Animal magnetism should be considered in your hands as a sixth artificial sense." Mesmer, *Précis historique des faits relatifs au Magnétisme animal jusques en avril 1781* (London: n.p., 1781), 24. Puységur also called this sixth sense "clairvoyance" or "clear seeing." Puységur, *Mémoires,* 33.

with magnetic sleep: diagnosing one's own illness, diagnosing illness in others, prescribing the treatment for an illness, and foreseeing its course, which he called *pressentation*.[233] In this context, the strength of magnetic rapport is one of the clearest indications that the subject is in fact in a somnambulistic state. Most notably, Puységur believed that "his somnambulists experienced the strongest dependence and rapport when they were most ill."[234] Just as the Mesmeric crisis was the strongest in sick patients, for him the strength of *rapport* is proportional to the degree of illness in the patients. As the latter then progressed towards good health, the strength of rapport gradually decreased. As Adam Crabtree has observed, Puységur believed this variability to be "so consistent that the degree of rapport could be used as an index of the degree of illness."[235] And indeed, as his first subject Victor Race predicted, once cured, he was no longer magnetizable.[236]

Another specificity of Puységur's model is that it takes into account the controversial phenomenon that would later on be called "post-hypnotic amnesia" by late-nineteenth-century physicians. Already in 1784, Puységur noted Victor's inability to recollect the events which occurred during his magnetic sleep, concluding that "the demarcation [between the waking and somnambulistic state] is so great that one must regard these two states as two different existences."[237] On the other hand, in magnetic sleep Puységur notes a continuity of memory: the subject is able to recall the content of both the waking state and of previous magnetic states: "in the magnetic state, [subjects] have both the idea and memory of everything that happens to them in the natural state, whereas in the latter state they do not remember anything that happens to them while in the magnetic state … with five senses, they cannot remember ideas formed with six.[238] Furthermore, these "different existences" present highly contrasting characteristics. In the magnetized state, subjects reveal extra-ordinary abilities or striking personality traits that are absent from their waking state: "When [Victor] is in crisis, I know no one as profound, prudent, or clear-sighted."[239] In a sense, Puységur's reconceptualization of the magnetic—convulsive—crisis as a peaceful somnambulistic sleep, not only depathologizes the state of artificial somnambulism, but also anticipates ulterior conceptions of the Unconscious as a reservoir of

[233] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 73; 87; 111; 180.
[234] Puségur, *Mémoires,* 206.
[235] Crabtree, 41; Puységur, 1784, 206.
[236] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 228.
[237] Ibid., 90. This statement can be considered as one of the earliest formulations of what would later on become the "dual consciousness" paradigm.
[238] Ibid., 90.
[239] Puységur, *Mémoires* 32-33Ibid., inspiration-dispossession, the poet is unable to create his work of art.

capabilities and potentialities, as opposed to libidinal, aggressive drives or persecutory tendencies.[240]

An Act of the Will

Puységur's "cutting the cord" from the Mesmeric model precipitated the shift away from physicalism and toward focusing on the mental faculties involved in inducing magnetic sleep and healing: "When you magnetized him your goal was to put him to sleep, and you accomplished that solely by *the act of your will.* So now it is by *an act of your will* that you awaken him."[241] Although in Puységur's model, man is still conceived as an electric animal-machine,[242] he is also endowed with the will, a faculty on which a tremendous amount of emphasis is placed on, thereby broadening the gap with Mesmer: "Our electric organization is so perfect that with the help of the will alone we can produce phenomena which, while being very physical, have the air of the miraculous."[243] Indeed, unlike what was implied in Mesmer's physicalist, materialist framework, for Puységur, once rapport has been established, the will of the operator is all that is necessary to "move" the somnambulist subject:

> When [the operator] wants to move a magnetic being [the somnambulist] by a simple act of the will, nothing more astonishing takes place than what happens in our ordinary actions. I will to pick up a piece of paper on the table; I order my arm, and my hand to take hold of it. Since the rapport between my principal driving force—my will—and my hand is very intimate, the effect of my will is manifested so quickly that I have no need to reflect on the operation.[244]

The object-subject rapport is as immediate as the "rapport" between will and body part. In a material mechanistic world ("to move"), the will has the power to create physical effects, to be transferred, to act, in all of its immediate potency. The importance of the material fluid is thus overshadowed by the powers of the mind: "The direct communication of the will to the vital principle is no longer in doubt for us."[245] Taking into account this immediate and powerful relation,

[240] The fact that late nineteenth-century cases of *grande hystérie* demonstrated such exuberant convulsive movements can in this sense be considered as a scientific "regression," away from Puységur's somnambulistic model and back to the original Mesmeric paradigm.
[241] Puységur, *Du Magnétisme animal,* 161-169.
[242] This conception was common at the end of the eighteenth-century. See Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *L'Homme Machine: A Study in the Origins of an Idea*. (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1960).
[243] Puységur, *Mémoires*, 13.
[244] Puységur, *Suite des mémoires*, 17.
[245] Ibid., 62.

in *Du Magnétisme animal* (1820), Puységur will then start to sketch out an ethics of the therapeutic—one might even say, psychotherapeutic *avant la lettre*[246]—relation:

> If one touches [magnetizes] an ill person without intention or attention, one effects neither good nor bad … There is only one way to magnetize usefully: that is strongly and constantly to *will the good and the benefit of the ill person, and never to change or vary the will* … The compassion which an ill person inspires in me produces a desire or thought to be useful to him. And from the moment I make up my mind to try to help him, his vital principle receives the impression of the action of my will.[247]

The importance of paying attention to the practitioner's own belief and value system, to the way in which their own intention and affects might influence the therapeutic relation, will reemerge up until two centuries later, in the emphasis on the hypnotherapist's ethical responsibilities, affective congruence, and in models in which the affective nature of the therapeutic relation is strategically used. In any case, here one can note how "Puységur turned animal magnetism into a new and clearly psychological direction. He explicitly opposed a materialist philosophy of nature" and in the end, "believed that the phenomena of animal magnetism provided strong evidence against it."[248] Establishing the certainty or existence of the magnetic fluid is irrelevant to the process of healing—what matters is the effect, not the cause: "I do not know any longer if there is a magnetic fluid, an electric fluid, a luminous fluid, etc. I am only sure and certain that to magnetize well it is absolutely useless to know whether a single fluid exists or not."[249] The value of therapeutic efficacy has therefore overpowered the question of theoretical or scientific inquiry.[250]

With this gesture—this "cutting the cord" with the mesmeric model—Puységur inserted a split into Mesmeric theory, between proponents of the fluidic model on the one hand, and of the psychological model on the other, both of which coexisted throughout the nineteenth century.[251] With his discovery of magnetic sleep, he paved the way for the discovery of hypnotism and its breaking away from the materialism of the mesmeric model.

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[246] Crabtree for instance titles one of his sections about Puységur "Psychotherapy."
[247] Puységur, *Du Magnétisme animal,* 153-155.
[248] Crabtree, 52.
[249] Puységur, *Du Magnétisme animal,* 155-156.
[250] Just as Mesmer underlined the importance of lived experience in the *understanding* required to comprehend animal magnetism—an understanding which both commissions lacked, as Chertock and Stengers have argued—Puységur invokes a similar argument about the question of magnetizing from a distance: "this is the kind of thing that it is impossible to prove by rational arguments and for which experience alone provides certainty. For that reason, it is to men who are aware of this small part of their power that I now direct some recommendations about the best way to use it." Puységur, 1785, 112-113.
[251] Ellenberger, *Discovery*, 148.

1.1.3. The Power of the Imagination

As George Makari has shown in *Soul Machine*, despite its scientific ambition, the materialist monism behind Mesmerism can be considered as a paradoxical "illusion" produced by the Enlightenment, a form of "faith healing" that played into the *beliefs* of the more educated members of society in the illuminating power of science: indeed, in trying to rid the world of superstition, "the imagination of the enlightenment subject, schooled to accept invisible forces, had developed into a *credulity* for unseen material forces."[252] In the same way that Mesmer reframed Father Gassner's "soul cures" as nervous ones, and that the Franklin commission reframed Mesmer's nervous cures as mental ones, Puységur paved the way for a mental, dematerialized conception of magnetism to appear."[253] As Bertrand Méheust has noted, the nineteenth-century conception of magnetism then branched out into various schools, which can broadly be divided into four branches: the mesmerists, who held on to the materialist conception of the fluid; the spiritualists, who embraced the parapsychological and occult phenomena associated with magnetism; the psychofluidists, who followed Puységur's middle-road between materialism and a purely mental conception, and the imaginationists, who inherited the conclusion from the 1784 commission but, rather than dismissing the phenomenon of magnetism altogether, argued that the powers of the imagination held potential which could be exploited therapeutically. It is the latter view which, as I will show in the next section, laid the groundwork for hypnosis *proper* to emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century.[254] In this section we will briefly examine the theoretical position of three central figures in the transition from Mesmerism to hypnotism. This shift in paradigms created not only a change in induction methods and curative techniques, but also brought about a significant change in vocabulary, demonstrating that the dematerialization of the phenomenon occurred early on in the century.

1.1.3.1. The Abbé Faria: Anticipations of the Powers of Suggestion

[252] George Makari, *Soul Machine. The Invention of the Modern Mind* (New York and London: Norton, 2015), 318.
[253] Makari, 315. The commission opened up a long line of controversies surrounding the nature of the curative power of magnetism, which ultimately spread a paradoxical counter narrative throughout the first half of the 19th century, ironically linking Mesmer's theory to its polar opposite: spiritualism and the occult. We shall return to the spiritualist conception of magnetism and its literary representations in the second chapter.
[254] Bertrand Méheust, "Sous le magnétisme des romanciers, le magnétisme 'réel'," in *Traces du mesmérisme dans les littératures européennes du XIXe siècle* (Bruxelles: Presses de l'Université Saint-Louis, 2001), 39.

José Custodio de Faria (1755-1819)—also called the Abbé Faria—is a pivotal figure in the move from theories of magnetism towards hypnotism, and in substituting the power of suggestion to that of the imponderable fluid. In his 1819 treatise *De la Cause du sommeil lucide*, he defines "lucid sleep" as a form of natural somnambulism which is to be "developed with art, guided with wisdom, and cultivated with caution."[255] Denying the existence of the fluid, he believed the true cause of magnetism to be psychological. Developing a new vocabulary that moved away from the fluidic model, he used the concept of "concentration" rather than animal magnetism and the term "*épopte"* to refer to the somnambulistic subject. The most notable modification in the Abbé Faria's model is his move away from Puységur's contention that the will of the magnetizer is the cause of magnetic sleep and healing. With Faria, lucid sleep is explained by the effects of *suggestion*—which he called "effects announced in advance—and the focus is placed on the abilities of the subject, not the operator. Indeed, Faria's induction technique takes into account the effects of the operator's words, rather than his will: "I seat them comfortably and energetically pronounce the word 'sleep' ... I tell them to close their eyes and I always say that when I will forcibly pronounce the command to sleep they will feel a trembling all over and will fall asleep."[256] Here, the physicality of the Mesmeric model—which relied heavily on the sense of touch—is replaced by a more verbal relation, in which the operator's commands require the subject's active participation to succeed. Indeed, for Faria, there is no external agent involved in the effects of lucid sleep. Rather, the magnetizer uses suggestion to allow the subject to *put himself* into a state of sleep, even when the latter "has the false conviction that he needs an external agent to accomplish this."[257] Furthermore, for Faria, the suggestions responsible for the healing powers of lucid sleep are effective "whether made in lucid sleep or in the waking state."[258] With this idea, Faria thus anticipates the Bernheimian theory of suggestion, indicating that the subject's abilities are constantly available, rather than dependent on the state of trance.[259]

1.1.3.2. Cuvilliers: The New Vocabulary of the Imaginationists

[255] José Custodio de Faria, *De la cause du sommeil lucide, ou étdue de la nature de l'homme* (Paris: Mme Horiac, 1819), 22.
[256] Faria, Ibid.,192-193.
[257] Crabtree, 123.
[258] Faria, *De la cause,* 51; 78.
[259] See Bernheim, "Suggestion in the Waking State," in *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 78.

Similarly, Hénin de Cuvilliers (1755-1841) and his pivotal imaginationist position, according to which "it is truly the imagination that always produces the pretended magnetic phenomena," and his rejection of the occult elements associated with animal magnetism brought about a similar need for a new vocabulary.[260] As Adam Crabtree has observed, Cuvilliers developed—among others, a set of terms gravitating around the Greek *hypnos*:

> Somnambulists were called *hypnoscopes* (those who see while asleep), *hypnologues* (those who talk during sleep) and *hypnobates* (those who walk during sleep); the process of producing somnambulists was called *hypnoscopie;* and *hypnocratie* referred to the power that produced the effects of *hypnoscopie.*[261]

Thus, the traditional attribution of the coinage of the term "hypnotism" to James Braid in 1842-43 must be reconsidered in light of Cuvilliers' earlier terms, which include *hypnotisme, hypnotiseur,* and *hypnotiste*.[262]

As in Faria, with Cuvilliers we find the notion that the success of magnetic action is attributable to a shared self-delusion, both on the part of the magnetist—who believes he produces the magnetic phenomena by directing the fluid with the force of his will—and the operator—whose delusion makes the effects of magnetism "real." In other words, the effects are caused by both subjects' imaginations, "fired by the expectation of a particular outcome." In this way, without realizing it, the magnetizer and subject "cooperate psychologically to produce the effect ... suggested by the words or actions of the magnetizer or by the context of the encounter, which creates the expectation of certain phenomena."[263] As we will note further down, this imaginationist position anticipates twentieth-century social-psychological theories of hypnotism that define hypnotic phenomena as the product of tacit cooperation between two individuals, engaging various modes of role playing and expectancies on the part of subject. With Cuvilliers, we get an early sense that the responses of the subject to the operator's words and commands are the true "agent," the actual cause of the—observable yet unexplainable—mysterious magnetic effects. From Puységur to Faria to Cuvilliers, with this shift from mesmerism to psychofluidism to imaginationism, the agent has shifted from an external material force—the fluid—to an external immaterial force—the operator's will—to an internal psychological force—the subject's imagination.

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[260] Cuvilliers, *Archives* 5:55-57 in Crabtree, 125.
[261] Crabtree, 124.
[262] Ibid., 124, note 6.
[263] Ibid., 125.

1.1.3.3. James Braid: From Magnetism to Neurypnology

James Braid (1795-1860), the Scottish surgeon associated with the coinage of the term "hypnotism," claims that his initial encounter with magnetism occurred in 1841 when he attended a demonstration by a mesmerist called Lafontaine, in Manchester. This encounter was initially tinged with skepticism, as Braid suspected magnetic phenomena were the result of "collusion or delusion, or of excited imagination, sympathy or imitation."[264] At a second demonstration that occurred six days later however, Braid observed that the magnetized subject was unable to open his eyes, which led him to elaborate his own theory—and induction method—of hypnosis, based on the phenomenon of eye fixation. With this theory, Braid challenged Lafontaine's ideas and inaugurated a pivotal break away from the mesmeric model, which traditionally induced magnetism with a series of "passes," that is, with gestures and movements serving to direct the fluid in a given direction. In Braid's model, the fluid itself disappears completely, and hypnotism is both induced and explained by the effects of fixation on the subject's brain and body:[265]

> The phenomena of mesmerism were to be accounted for on the principle of derangement of the state of the cerebral-spinal centres and … by a fixed stare, absolute repose of the body, fixed attention, and suppressed respiration, concomitant with the fixity of attention ... That the whole depended on the physical and psychical condition of the patient … and not at all on the volition, or passes of the operator, throwing out a magnetic fluid, or exciting into activity some mystical universal fluid or medium.[266]

As magnetic sleep is a particular state of the brain and spinal cord, its phenomena can be explained by "the brain [having] an impressibility stamped on it which renders the patient subject to be acted on entirely through the imagination, and this is the grand source of the follies which have misled

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[264] James Braid, *Neurypnology,* ed. A. Waite (London: G. Redway, 1899), 98.

[265] Braid's method of eye fixation, which involves concentrating the gaze on a fixed point or a small, bright object about fifteen inches above the subject's head until they experience considerable eye train, vibratory motion and eventually, temporary paralysis or catalepsy of the eyelids, is still used by hypnotists today and considered a classic hypnotic induction. It is worth noting, however, that eye fixation was already used by magnetists, including Mesmer in his own magnetic cures of the late 1700s, but was combined with a complex system of magnetic passes: "Mesmer would vary his passes according to the problem being treated. The *Magnétisme à grand courant* were passes which traverse the patient's whole body, sweeping from the top down, hands placed in a pyramid shape, then back up. The *Passes longitudinales* were made from a distance, either with the pyramid shape of the fingers, or through wands of brass or iron." Crabtree, 14. The *Magnétisme à grand courant* was also applied to a tree, with patients holding on to ropes tied to its branches. As we shall see in Chapter 2, this intricate system of magnetic passes and process of magnetizing a tree will be severely mocked in Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet.* Significantly, Pierre Janet, who greatly admired the magnetists, still used a combination of verbal suggestions and passes well into the 1890s.

[266] Braid, *Neurypnology,* A. Waite edition (London: G. Redway, 1899), 101-102.

… the animal magnetisers."[267] The extraordinary power of an external agent—of the operator or the fluid—need not intervene in this explanation.

In 1842, Braid published a central pamphlet titled *Satanic Agency and Mesmerism Reviewed,* in which he explains the nature and causes of mesmerism on the basis of purely psychological and psychological elements, using the terms *neurohypnology* and *neurohypnotism* to replace that of mesmerism*,* transposing the Greek the notions of "nerve" and "sleep" into English.[268] With this new vocabulary, he described the subject as being under "hypnotic influence" and undergoing "hypnotic sleep," and the process of producing the state as "hypnotizing."[269] In his seminal work *Neurypnology* (1843), he then confirmed the establishment of such terminology.[270] After a period during which he experimented with "phreno-hypnotism," in 1845 Braid narrowed his focus, studying the way in which the physiological can be influenced by mental processes or "efforts," both voluntary and involuntary.[271] In this way, he participated in theorizing hypnotism in psychological terms, defining it as a state of concentrated attention and absorption of the mind on a given idea:

> The condition is essentially one of mental abstraction or concentration of attention, in which the powers of the mind are engrossed, if not entirely absorbed, with a single idea or train of thought, and concurrently rendered unconscious of, or indifferently conscious to, all other ideas or impressions.[272]

In a sense, Braid's new model thus anticipated the concept of monoideism which later appeared *in fin-de-siècle* explanations of dissociation, hysteria and the neuroses. Indeed, for Braid, the individual can suffer from the presence of "dominant" or "fixed" ideas, which impact not only the mind but also the body, in either beneficial or harmful ways.[273] As a form of absorption

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[267] Braid, "Animal Magnetism," in *Medical Times* (March 12, 1842): 283.
[268] Braid, *Satanic Agency and Mesmerism Reviewed* (Manchester: Sims and Dinham, Galt and Anderson, 1842). As Adam Crabtree explains, this pamphlet was a response to a sermon that declared mesmerism to be the work of the devil. See also James Braid, "Neuro-hypnotism," in *Medical Times* (July 9, 1842): 239.
[269] As Crabtree observes, this is "the first appearance in print of a terminology that would become standard, up until this day." Crabtree, 158.
[270] James Braid, *Neurypnology; or the Rationale of Nervous Sleep, Considered in Relation with Animal Magnetism* (London: John Churchill, 1843). The adjective "hypnotic" concerns the state of nervous sleep, the verb to "hypnotize" refers to the induction of such sleep, to "dehypnotize" is to restore the subject from the state of nervous sleep, and the "hypnotist" is the one who practices hypnotism. See Braid, *Neurypnology,* 94.
[271] Braid, *On Hypnotism. Neurypnology* ed. A. Waite (London: G. Redway, 1899), 212. With "phreno-hypnotism," Braid induced nervous sleep, before applying pressure or friction to the subject's head in order to stimulate various "organs" of the brain.
[272] James Braid, *Electrico-Biological Phenomena Considered Physiologically and Psychologically* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1851), 6.
[273] As Crabtree indicates, Braid distinguished the general doctrine of the influence of dominant ideas on mental and physical processes—which he called *monoideology,* or *psycho-physiology*—from the condition in which the mind is

centered on a single idea, hypnotism can be used to generate new fixed ideas, or direct the patient's attention away from detrimental ones. Indeed, it functions in a similar manner, by concentrating the mind on an idea or impression to the exclusion of others. This state of absorbed focus has physiological repercussions which explain the extraordinary effects and curative power of magnetism, which are due to the power of mental processes and suggestions on the body. Indeed, the mere direction of the attention onto an idea can bring about various bodily changes—such as the production of saliva, tears, lactation, blushing or palpitations from fear, and so on. In this way, as Adam Crabtree puts it, Braid attributed "all peculiar phenomena of memory, all apparently supernormal perceptions, all unusual physiological effects and all curative powers" to the subject's state of concentrated attention, framing a conception of hypnotism in "purely psychological terms."[274]

Indeed, for Braid, hypnotism is neither an unnatural nor a supernatural state, but rather an amplification tool, a means of increasing—and thereby of controlling—the power of the mind over the somatic, which already exists in the natural, waking state. For Braid, hypnosis "merely enables us to control and direct the natural functions, either exciting them or depressing them, as required, with more certainty and intensity than the normal waking condition."[275] Indeed,

> Since it cannot be doubted that the soul and the body can mutually act and react upon each other, it should follow, as a natural consequence, that if we can attain to any mode of intensifying the *mental* power, we should thus realize, in a corresponding degree, greater control over physical action. Now this is precisely what my processes do—they create no new faculties; but they give us greater control the natural functions that we possess during the ordinary waking condition.[276]

Hypnotism, then, is brought back into the realm of the natural. It helps create new fixed ideas by using the curative power of suggestion (or "expectant ideas") and redirecting the attention:

> By our various modes of suggestion ... we fix certain ideas, strongly and involuntarily in the mind of the patient, which thereby act as stimulants or as sedatives, according to the purport of the expectant ideas ... For this purpose I feel convinced that hypnotism may be applied in the cure of some forms of disease with the same ease and certainty as our most simple and approved methods of treatment.[277]

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possessed by a dominant idea—which he called *monoideism,* or *ideo-dynamic.* See Braid, *The Physiology of Fascination and the Critics Criticized* (Manchester: Grant, 1855), 9-10; Crabtree 161.

[274] Crabtree, 160-1.

[275] James Braid, "Magic, Mesmerism, hypnotism, etc. historically and physiologically considered," *Medical Times* 11 (1844-1845): 297.

[276] Braid, "Hypnotic Therapeutics, Illustrated by Cases," *Monthly J. Medical Science* 17 (1853):12.

[277] Braid, Ibid., 8.

Excluding diseases with a "purely organic" cause, Braid made frequent therapeutic use of hypnosis to cure or provide symptom relief in disorders which include physical symptoms.[278] However, it is for his pioneering experimentation with hypnotic analgesia that he is mostly remembered for. Indeed, after inducing nervous sleep, Braid observed "low circulation and suppressed respiration" in the subject, during which "the blood, from being thus insufficiently arterialized, acts as a narcotic."[279] In this way, provided that "the attention has also been fixed in some particular train of thought, every other function becomes deadened in an extraordinary degree, so that severe operations and inflictions may be done in that state without the patient evincing any apparent consciousness of pain."[280] Braid also distinguished two "degrees" of hypnotism, one of which he described as a "sub- or half waking condition" and the other as a full state of hypnotism, also called "second conscious" or "double conscious," which according to him is necessary for "the most striking phenomena" to take place.[281]

Braid's theory of hypnotism can therefore be considered as the origin of the suggestive therapeutics that would develop at the end of the century, in the work of Hippolyte Bernheim and Pierre Janet.[282] However, as Alan Gauld argues, although his work "foreshadows" the hypnotic and psychotherapeutic movements of the late nineteenth century," it cannot be thought of as having "influenced" them, strictly speaking.[283] Indeed, although his model—which attempted to produce scientific explanation of hypnotism that would also naturalize the occult—helped mitigate skepticism about magnetism in Great Britain and France in the 1850s, its effects did not last. As Gauld puts it, the "little bit of interest in Braidism" that appeared in the 1850s had already evaporated by the end of the 1860s.[284] This is in great part due to the strong wave of spiritism—

[278] For instance, although Braid claimed to have cured or ameliorated conditions like epilepsy, gout, menstrual disorders, constipation, headache, paralysis, spinal irritation and gout with hypnosis, when the cause of the condition is "purely organic," hypnotic treatment cannot bring about a cure. See Braid, "Hypnotic Therapeutics," 19; Crabtree, 161-162; Gauld 286-287.
Crabtree, 162.
[279] Braid, "Hypnotic Therapeutics," 9.
[280] Ibid., 9.
[281] Braid, Ibid., 5; 26; Crabtree, 161. As we say, this notion of a "double" consciousness is already sketched out in Puységur's model. By insisting on the importance of inducing a "full" state of hypnotism—later on called "deep hypnotic trance"—Braid disagrees with conceptions such as those of the Abbé Faria or Bernheim, for whom suggestions and suggestive therapeutics are also efficacious in the waking state.
[282] This can especially be felt in one of Braid's more "psychological" cases, where a patient was suffering from "insanity" and "haunted with the idea of the personal presence of a departed relative." After having "a different idea excited in her mind" during hypnosis, she never experienced the "unwelcome apparition" again. See Braid "Hypnotic Therapeutics," 19 and Crabtree, 162.
[283] Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism,* 286.
[284] Ibid., 288.

which had developed in the United States—that, as Henri Ellenberger has shown, began flooding Europe, sweeping over England and Germany in 1852, and France in 1853. Although the advent of spiritism was important in the advent of dynamic psychiatry—as it provided "psychologists and psychopathologists with new approaches to the mind" and scientists and physicians strived to explain its manifestations—it also tied hypnotism to a series of paranormal and parapsychological phenomena—ranging from telepathy and clairvoyance to mediumship and table turning—that severely undermined its scientific pretensions.[285]

As we shall see in Chapter 2, in both the popular and literary imagination, the association between magnetism, Mesmerism and the occult was systematically projected onto hypnotism, creating a confusion that late nineteenth-century literary authors frequently exploited in their fictional works.

Due to the mid-century resurgence of occultist practices and spiritualism, from the 1860s to the 1880s, magnetism and hypnotism had thus "fallen into such disrepute that a physician working with these methods would irretrievably have compromised his scientific career and lost his medical practice."[286]" It would take two decades for this period of decline of to end and for interest in hypnotism to be revived in the 1880s and 1890s, a decade which is considered by historians as being the "heyday" and "Golden age" of hypnotism, proper.[287]

1.1.4. The Golden Age of Hypnotism

During this Golden age, hypnotism received sufficient institutional recognition and managed to separate itself from both the fluidist-materialist monism and the aura of supernaturalism linked to Mesmerism. In this way, during the *fin-de-siècle* period, it became the "royal road to the unknown mind."[288] During its decline, European psychiatry had in the meantime

[285] Ellenberger, 85.
[286] Ellenberger, 85. Indeed, in the second half of the century, the electromagnetotrope was no longer used to explained the functioning of the nervous system and the magnetists who continued to practice in the later part of the century were "for the most part either persons involved in occultisms of one sort or another, or unorthodox healers catering for a rather simple-minded clientele." Gauld, 266. As Ellenberger notes, Auguste Ambroise Liébeault, to whom we will return further down, was among the few practitioners who dared experiment with hypnotism during this time. Nevertheless, according to Alan Gauld, if Braid influenced a school of thought, it was Charles Richet and the Salpêtrière school, rather than Liébeault and the Nancy school which emerged from it. See Gauld, 288.
[287] The decline of mesmerism-hypnotism occurred against a background "rather brash" medical and scientific materialism which culminated in the 1870s while "the last remnants of romantic nature-philosophy sputtered fitfully toward the horizon." Gauld, 297.
[288] Ellenberger, 112.

taken a turn towards purely organic approach, with a strong emphasis on neurophysiology and neuroanatomy, on "the hospital, the clinic, and even the autopsy table, as the arenas within which alone significant advances were likely to be made."[289] In order to gain scientific legitimacy, hypnosis thus had to adapt to the experimental methods and organicist approach that would guarantee its status as an object of scientific inquiry.

In what follows, we will discuss its use in the three main practitioners and theorists of the French *fin-de-siècle* period, whose names remain associated with hypnotism to this day: Jean-Martin Charcot from the Salpêtrière school, Hippolyte Bernheim from the Nancy school, and Pierre Janet, whose medical career was preceded by one in philosophy. Despite the strong divergences in their theoretical positions, all three stand out as central figures whose work had a seminal influence not only in medical and literary fields of the time, but also on Freud himself, during the early years which led to the invention of psychoanalysis. An examination of *the fin-de-siècle* pre-Freudian unconscious in the work of these three French hypnotists therefore helps bring to the foreground the various competing models which existed in the early days of dynamic psychiatry, and the complex web of interactions and influence from which the "psychical unconscious" in its analytic formulation was able to emerge.

1.1.4.1. Charcot's Fantasy

During the years 1870-1893, Jean Martin Charcot (1835-1893) was considered to be the greatest neurologist of his time. In 1862, he was appointed chief-physician at one of the largest sections of the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, and began investigating the phenomenon of hysteria in the 1870s.[290] While his career reached its paroxysm in 1880-1882, Charcot's interest in hypnotism, "of which he undertook a purportedly scientific study," began in 1878 and used "several of the most gifted of his female hysterical patients" as its subjects.[291] In addition to his experimental research, Charcot also conducted weekly lectures, which were notoriously divided into the formal—and highly theatrical—Friday lectures, and the more private and informal,

[289] Gauld, 297. As Gauld puts, it: in this context, "the psyche was almost squeezed out of psychiatry." Ibid.
[290] As Ellenberger explains, when Charcot first arrived at the Salpêtrière as an "interne," it was still "an old hospital," serving mainly as "a medical poorhouse for four or five thousand old women." In 1870, he assumed the charged of a special ward containing epileptic and hysteric female patients. Having to distinguish the epileptic patients from the hysteric ones who had "learned to imitate epileptic crises," he then began his investigation of hysteria with his disciple Paul Richer, using the same method as for the investigation of organic neurological diseases. See Ellenberger 89-90.
[291] Ellenberger, 90.

Tuesday clinical demonstrations.[292] With hypnotism, Charcot was able to produce a clinical picture identical to the one found in hysteria, and reproduce artificially the various phenomena—such as paralyses, contractures and convulsions—from which the hysteric patient suffered. Charcot's work followed a somatological approach, fitting the scientific theories and methods of the time, which frequently reverted to hereditary degeneration as an explanation of pathology and searched for the organic causes of psychological disease.[293]

However, in spite of this "heavily organic psychiatry" and in the context of a "resolutely experimental medicine" influenced by Claude Bernard, with Charcot's work on hypnotism and hysteria, doctors and researchers also spoke of "an emerging experimental psychology, with hypnotism as its favored tool."[294]As Ellenberger notes, the acceptance of Charcot's findings on hypnotism by the Académie des Sciences—which he read publicly to them in 1882—constituted a true *tour de force,* given that the Academy had condemned hypnotism three times within the past century under the name of magnetism.[295] Charcot's work thus "gave hypnotism a new dignity" and with his seminal 1882 paper, "the heretofore shunned object once again became the topic of innumerable publications."[296]

Hypnosis as an Object of Experimental Scientific Inquiry

The results of Charcot's observations on hysteric patients were transcribed in systematic form by his pupil Paul Richer in the *Études cliniques sur l'hystéroépilepsie ou grande hystérie,* (1881). According to the Salpêtrière school, the typical hysteric crisis followed four distinct phases: epileptoid, clownish, passionate and hallucinatory.[297] As for hypnosis, which itself was

[292] As Gauld notes, the theatrical dimension of the formal lectures was emphasized by stage lighting, the use of photographic slides and the scrupulous preparation of the presentation which Charcot would deliver to an audience composed not only of men of science, but also of laymen and society figures, journalists and writers. During the Tuesday demonstrations on the other hand, discussion was open, and Charcot would examine patients, including ones he had not seen before. Gauld, 307-308.
[293] Gauld, 298.
[294] Finn, 124.
[295] Ellenberger, 90. Pierre Janet describes it as the "break[ing] of a dam behind which a vat head of water had been accumulating." See Pierre Janet, *Psychological Healing: A Historical and Clinical Study,* vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 170-171.
[296] Ellenberger, Ibid. See Jean-Martin Charcot, *"*Physiologie pathologique. Sur les divers états nerveux déterminés par l'hypnotisation chez les hystériques," *Comptes-rendus hebdomadaires de l'Académie des Sciences* 94 (1882): 403–5.
[297] Paul Richer, *Études cliniques sur l'hystéroépilepsie ou grande hystérie* (Paris: Delahaye & E. Lecrosnier, 1881). The "epileptoid" stage, itself composed of "tonic" and "clonic" phases, lasted for about five minutes. The "clownish" stage involved the production of exuberant, disordered movements, including the famous *arc de cercle,* which resembles demonic possession. In the passionate phase (*phase des attitudes passionnelles*), the subject mimed or acted

considered as an artificially created neurosis, Charcot developed a nosography which divided it into three successive phases—catalepsy, lethargy and somnambulism.[298] The somatic phenomena demonstrated during what Charcot called "*grand hypnotisme"*—namely, neuromuscular hyperexcitability and cataleptic plasticity—served to illustrate the *summum* and most sophisticated of the hypnotic-hysterical states, which was only demonstrated in a small number of talented subjects.[299] George Guillain gives a convenient summary of the views of the Salpêtrière school on hypnotism:[300]

> (1) Hypnosis is an artificially induced morbid condition; a neurosis found only in the hysterical. (2) Women are more easily influenced than men; children and old people are insusceptible. (3) Hypnosis can be produced purely by physical means; a person can be hypnotized unknown to himself. (4) Hypnotic phenomena can be induced, transferred or terminated by metals, magnets and so forth.[301]

Charcot's pupils claimed that with his work on hypnotism, he was "the first" to have produced "material symptoms, which give to some extent an anatomical demonstration of the reality of a special state of the nervous system."[302]

On the one hand, it has been pointed out that Charcot's views, due to their strong organicist dimension, can be considered as a revised form of the physicalist-fluidist theory initiated by Mesmer.[303] On the other, some historians, such as Lilian Furst, have underlined an ambiguity in

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out a series of emotions ranging from fear to erotic desire, to ecstasy, hence the association between hysteria and the concept of *mimesis.* Finally, the hallucinatory phase involved a period or delirium and disorientation. See Richer, 253-323. All of these phases are captured in the famous iconography of the Salpêtrière, composed of numerous photographies and in Richer's drawings.

[298] According to Charcot and his disciples, the main bodily manifestations of hypnosis are also those of hysteria, with which it also shares the common trait of heightened suggestibility. During the "cataleptic" phase, the patient is immobile but not stiff, her limbs will stay in place regardless of the position given to them and will be especially prone to acting out emotional states or *attitudes*. In the "lethargic" state, she seems to enter a state of deep sleep and becomes insensitive to stimuli and suggestions. In the "somnambulistic" phase, obtained by "rubbing the head" of a patient in the previous phases, produce anesthesia and "neuromuscular hyperexcitability," as well as high suggestibility. Unlike the automaton-like behavior of the cataleptic, the somnambulist interprets suggestions "intelligently" and actively. See Gauld, 312-313.

[299] J. M. Charcot, "Physiologie pathologique. Sur les divers états nerveux determinés par l'hypotisation chez les hystériques," *Comptes Rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 94 (February 13, 1882): 403.

[300] The school was composed of Charcot and his disciples, among whom Paul Richer (1849-1933), Pierre Marie (1853-1940), Gilles de la Tourette (1857-1904), J. F. F. Babinski (1857-1832) and Charles S. Féré (1852-1907).

[301] George Guillain, "J. M. Charcot, His Life—His work*,"* in *Foundations of Hypnosis*, ed. M. Tinterow (Springfield; IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher, 1970), 425. Indeed, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of Mesmer's late eighteenth-century experiments with Hell's magnets, Charcot used metalloscopy and metallotherapy to supplement or enhance the hypnotic phenomena which he elicited and, as he claimed, could be transferred (*transfert*), notably in the case of paralysis, from one area of the body to another.

[302] Alfred Binet and Charles Féré. *Le Magnétisme animal* (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillère et Cie., 1890), 85-86.

[303] Gregory McGuire, "The collective subconscious: psychical research in French psychology (1880-1920)," Presented at the 92nd Annual Meeting of the APA (Toronto: August 25-28, 1984), 12ff.

Charcot's work, where he also seems on the verge of recognizing the psychological factors in hysteria.[304] Indeed, later in his career, Charcot came to lay "increasing emphasis" upon the psychological factors that might interfere in the production of the neuroses.[305] This is especially the case with the diagnosis of hystero-traumatization (that is, the "traumatic neuroses" appearing in the patient after an accident[306]), as well as the question of the "functional lesions" in the hysterical subject and the "dynamic" role of conscious and unconscious memories in the etiology of neurosis and hysteria.[307] According to Furst, "more than his predecessors," Charcot attributes a "major significance to psychic trauma," if not in the—hereditary—causes of neurosis, at least in its acceleration or onset in the nervous individual or hysterically predisposed subject.[308] Nevertheless, it is important not to overemphasize the role of the psychological in Charcot's work. Indeed, until the end of his career, Charcot remained attached to the doctrine of anatomical localization and mistrustful of psychology, which, as he writes, is merely "the rational physiology of the cerebral cortex."[309] In Charcot's work, psychology remained subjugated to physiology. In this sense, with its emphasis on the somatic and its association between hypnosis and the pathological, hysterical crisis, Charcot's doctrine can indeed be thought to "hark back" to Mesmer's materialist model and its description of the magnetic crisis.[310]

Nevertheless, Charcot payed special attention in distinguishing his theory of hypnotism from the older practices of the magnetists, which lacked the scientific rigor demonstrated in his own experimental method. In his 1883 *Exposé des titres scientifiques*, Charcot affirmed that his

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[304] See Lilian Furst, *Before Freud, Hysteria and Hypnosis in Later Nineteenth-Century Psychiatric Cases* (Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg PA: Bucknell, 2008), 114-118.
[305] Gauld, 310.
[306] For instance, in his later years, Charcot distinguished between traumatic and organic paralysis, noting the similarities between the paralysis resulting from trauma and those he observed in hysterical subjects. After using hypnotic suggestion to reproduce its symptoms, Charcot concluded that the traumatic shock, because of the strain imposed on the nervous system, could produce a spontaneous hypnotic state which creates paralysis in the subject by the means of autosuggestion: "the idea arises in the patient's mind that he might become paralyzed; in one word, through auto-suggesiton, the rudimentary process becomes real." J. M. Charcot and P. Marie, "Hysteria mainly hystero-epilepsy," in *A Dictionary of Psycholgical Medicine* vol 1 (London: L J. and A. Churchill, 1892), 633. See also Crabtree, 167 and Gauld, 313.
[307] Richer, *Études cliniques sur la grande hystérie ou hystero-épilepsie,* 2nd Edition (Paris: Delahaye et Lecrosnier, 1885), 509.
[308] As Lilian Furst argues, "if the resultant picture is confused, it is because Charcot himself was undecided; he would have preferred a physical causality as more straightforward and open to proof; however, he has to make concessions and compromises with the possible role of psychological elements." In a case involving a women's functional amnesia for instance, "since he was unable to pinpoint the pathological lesion for hysteria, Charcot had to concede that it was perhaps not a purely organic disease." See Furst, *Before Freud*, 114-115.
[309] Furst, Ibid., 24.
[310] Crabtree, 167.

investigation on hypnotism constituted an absolute break—despite his personal, aesthetic and historical interest in possession and its representation in the visual arts[311]—with any occult or supernatural elements still associated with the practice. As he describes it, "every attempt was made [in his work] to avoid being attracted by the esoteric or the extraordinary, a peril which in this scientifically unexplored field was encountered, so to speak, at every step of the way."[312] Following a rational and clearly laid out method, the investigator must:

> Confine himself at first to an examination of the most simple and constant factors … and only investigate later and still with caution the more complex or evasive phenomena; and finally, to *omit systematically* … those phenomena which are of a much more obscure nature and which for the moment *do not appear to correlate with* any known *physiological mechanisms.*[313]

According to Charcot, it is "largely because these very simple precautions have been overlooked that the study of hypnotism as an experimental neurosis … have not until now borne fruit."[314]

The Experimental Theater

On the one hand, Charcot thus gave to hypnotism the status of a legitimate scientific object, meeting the standards of rational and experimental scientific study of his time.[315] On the other hand, it has become a well-known argument that, having "created a type of hysteria by suggestion," he ended up producing a clinical picture that was "totally artificial," for several reasons.[316]

First of all, the experiments at the Salpêtrière and his Friday demonstrations, which attracted large crowds, have frequently been compared to the theatrical stage on which actresses perform for their director and audience. Indeed, as Alan Gauld notes, the entire doctrine of the Paris school was based on the performance of no more than a dozen of Charcot's hysterical, female "star subjects."[317] Elaine Showalter, for example, has underlined the way in which Augustine, one

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[311] Indeed, Charcot and Paul Richer edited *Les Démoniaques dans l'art* (1887) and *Les difformes et les malades dans l'art* (1889), which compiled collected images and representations of epileptics, ecstatics and hysterics in paintings and other mediums such as mosaic, bas-reliefs, tapestries, and so on. As Lilian Furst notes, "in these images, scenes of histrionic spectacle mingle with the medical, as indeed they did in Charcot's lectures and case presentations." Furst, 116.

[312] Charcot, *Exposé des Titres Scientifiques* (Paris: Victor Goupy et Jourdan, 1883), 149.

[313] Charcot, Ibid., 149, emphasis added.

[314] Ibid.

[315] As Michael Finn notes, other Parisian doctors and researchers, such as Jules Luys at La Charité hospital and Amédée Dumontpallier at La Pitié, also and conducted "public demonstrations of hypnotized behavior. Finn, 125.

[316] Guillain, 245; Gauld, 308.

[317] Gauld, 311.

of Charcot's most famous subjects, would perform "scenes, acts tableaux and intermissions" at the Salpêtrière, "on cue and on schedule with the click of the camera."[318]

Furthermore, according to Georges Didi-Huberman, who has addressed some of the most vigorous criticism of Charcot's (re)invention of hysteria, the Salpêtrière school ended up turning experimental "hypocrisy" into stage direction:

> Hypocrisy offers a simple judgment as an act or decree of reality, and is fully—if obscurely—aware that it is doing so …. Figuring and directing, but always at the limits of counterfeiting: this is experimental (method) fabrication itself.[319]

As Didi-Huberman shows, the experimental protocols and performances of the Paris school, while taking themselves as objective observations, in fact produced "a response that feigns to allow the word of the other to spin out at its own rhythm, but a response that is always already interpretive and thus oracular. It is hypocrisy as method, a ruse of theatrical reason as it presumes to invent truth."[320]

Even during Charcot's time, such arguments were already being pronounced. For instance, Joseph Delboeuf, to whom we shall return further on, sided with the Nancy School, claiming that "the phenomena obtained with the hysterics of the Salpêtrière are all due to suggestion, as they can be reproduced at will with subjects who have no hysterical symptoms."[321] As we shall see, the Nancy school, led by Hippolyte Bernheim, did not hesitate to use ironical criticism to attack Charcot's position, pointing out that if the hysterical alone can be hypnotized, "we must conclude, from the statistics of suggestibility, that at least eighty per cent of mankind suffers from hysteria."[322]

Secondly, in passages such as the one from the "Exposé" cited higher up, Charcot seems to place a heavy—yet somewhat blind—emphasis on the methodological frame that, in the name of objective and experimental examination of the scientific object, participated in creating—through such acts of selection and rejection—the very object that it claims to observe. Indeed, as Chertock and Stengers have shown, the rational ideals set by Charcot paradoxically led the Salpêtrière school to overlook the power of suggestion that permeates even the most objective

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[318] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830 –1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 145.
[319] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria, Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2003), 8.
[320] Ibid., 8.
[321] Joseph Delboeuf, *Le Sommeil et les Rêves et autres textes* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1885), 337.
[322] Guillain, "J. M. Charcot, His Life—His work," 245.

experimental setting.[323] The most conspicuous failing of the Mesmerists was in this sense "one that they shared with a very large proportion of the hypnotists who followed in their footsteps in the second half of the nineteenth century."[324] Indeed, despite all his efforts and just like the magnetists from which he believed to have "freed" hypnotism, Charcot himself demonstrated what Alan Gauld calls "an almost complete failure to appreciate the powerful workings of the 'experimenter effect' and 'doctrinal compliance'" upon the subjects he observed.[325] In this way, the Salpêtrière's fantasy of a measurable, reproducible and objective theory of hysteria and hypnotism is the most telling example of how "the experimental history of hypnosis recounts the discovery of the snares of objectification, that is, the uncontrollable implication of the conditions that presumably insure objectivity in the very conditions of the phenomenon under study."[326]

As Charcot's death in 1893 and the end of the century approached, criticism of the Salpêtrière's pathologizing doctrine—with its three stages of hypnotism, its reduction of hypnosis to a morbid state and its restriction of hypnotic cure to nervous disease and hysteria—increased. After 1887, Charcot's ideas began to lose favor in the medical field, which was in great part due to the increased acceptance of the doctrine of its rival—and much smaller—school, the École de Nancy, according to which all hypnotic phenomena can be explained with the single concept of suggestion. [327]

1.1.4.2. Joseph Delboeuf's "Down to Earth" Criticism

In this context, one contemporary testimony to the debate—and shift—between the Salpêtrière and Nancy doctrines deserve closer examination. Although he was not a medical

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[323] Chertock and Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason,* 204.

[324] Gauld, 267. Furthermore, as Lilian Furst has argued, with Charcot's fascination, the "incidence and popularity" of hysteria "increased vastly in scale in France, as is reflected in the number of cases diagnosed as well as in the interest in and knowledge of the malady" Furst, 113.

[325] Nevertheless, despite this failure to grasp the methods of controlled experimentation which are "necessary to offer these dangers," the magnetists, and to a certain extent, the hypnotists of the *fin-de-siècle*, "can hardly be blamed for not coming to terms with a problem which was not even adequately spelled out until well into the [twentieth] century." See Gauld, 267.

[326] Chertock and Stengers, 204. For Pierre Janet, whose work we will discuss further on, Charcot's error can be explained by the fact that he would describe his patient's cases in front of them, that they had been trained beforehand by Charcot's assistants and therefore influenced to produce certain patterns of reaction, and that the three stages of hypnotism were foreshadowed by the preexisting practices of the magnetists themselves, which served as inspiration for the members of the Salpêtrière school. See Janet, *Psychological Healing*, 186-192 and Gauld, 314.

[327] By the time of the second International Congress on Experimental Psychology in London in 1892, the theories of the Salpêtrière school "had almost ceased to attract attention," and brutally declined after Charcot's death in 1893. Guillain, 425.

doctor, the Belgian psychologist and philosopher Joseph Delboeuf produced what can be considered as one of the most useful contemporary accounts of the *fin-de-siècle* disputes on the nature of hypnotism and on the limits of the Salpêtrière's doctrine.

The De-pathologization of Hypnosis

According to Delboeuf, at the Salpêtrière, patients were "encouraged indirectly to conform their acts to the theory" of the experimenters.[328] Indeed, having visited and observed the experiments of the Parisian school in the 1880s, Delboeuf pointed out the problematic nature of its method, which, absorbed in the theoretical paradigm that it was trying to prove, remained blind to the implicit suggestions that were given to patients on a daily basis. Commenting on the experiments with "transfer of sensibility" (*transfert)* for example, Delboeuf notes:

> I saw elementary precautions were neglected, such as refraining from speaking in front of the subjects, that the expected phenomena would be announced out loud, that instead of using an electro-magnet without the subject and the operator knowing, the latter simply pulled out a large U-shaped magnet from his pocket; when I saw there wasn't a single electric machine in the laboratory, I was overcome with defiance which, imperceptibly, undermined my faith in all the rest.[329]

Similarly, in his own patients, Delboeuf suspects that "the subject's behaviors could in part be induced by their hypnotist," concluding that hypnotic phenomena are the product of "training and suggestion."[330] Noting the individual variations in the behavior and tendencies exhibited by subjects who have been previously hypnotized or magnetized, he argues:

> The operator will have considered as essential characters which are in fact individual if not purely accidental, which presented themselves in his first subject. Unconsciously using suggestion, he will have transformed them in habitual signs; he will have become attached, still unknowingly, to obtaining them, in other subjects who will have produced them by imitation, and thereby, master and students, influencing one another reciprocally, will have kept feeding their mistake unceasingly.[331]

This led him to elaborate a definition of hypnosis as art of "creating," "prolonging," and "maintaining" a state of suggestibility.[332] As he explains, there can be different degrees of suggestibility, not only among various subjects—"subjects may respond to one operator and

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[328] Joseph Delboeuf, "Une visite à la Salpêtrière," in *Le Sommeil et les Rêves et autres textes* (1886; Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1993), 257.Delboeuf made this observation after noting the similar reactions found in subjects who had previously been magnetized by Donato—eyes wide open, convulsions, violent and sudden movements, raspy voice, and so on.
[329] Ibid., 255.
[330] Ibid., 259.
[331] Ibid., 259.
[332] Ibid., 332. For him, the highest degree of natural suggestibility is to be found in the intermediate state between waking and sleep.

remain unresponsive to another"—but in the same subject at various moments: "initially refractory subjects may become extremely docile. The inverse is true. So that a same individual may condense in themselves, successively, all the degrees of suggestibility."[333] Delboeuf's description is important for our purposes, as it produces a depathologized conception of hypnosis, which is a natural state involving the activity of the imagination:

> Hypnotic sleep differs only from natural sleep in that at least one of the senses remains completely open to certain kinds of impressions (for example, the voice of the hypnotist) and that this sleep, as the other kind, is characterized by the relative power of the imagination, which substitutes an imaginary world to the real world.[334]

Anticipating twentieth-century conceptions of hypnotism as role playing, Delboeuf argues that hypnosis requires cooperation, activity and understanding of the operator's expectations on the part of the subject, who "need[s] to possess a certain degree of intelligence. It is clear that if they do not understand what is expected of them, they will not execute it."[335]

Charcot's Unconscious Petitio Principii:

This is what allows Delboeuf to explain Charcot's assimilation of hypnosis to hysteria as a form of faulty inductive reasoning, an abusive generalization based on a mere "analogy between various hysterical phenomena and various hypnotic phenomena."[336] Indeed, as Delboeuf provocatively puts it:

> Engrossed in this idea, [Charcot] obtains from two or three hysterical subjects put under hypnosis the phenomena which he expected, without suspecting—who could have suspected at first?—that he was provoking them himself; and from then on he believes his opinion to be based on experience.[337]

After this, the members of the Paris school "remain blind to the most evident manifestations and entangle themselves in a physical theory of phenomena which have a purely psychological origin."[338]

Significantly, Delboeuf claims to have ended up siding with Bernheim and the Nancy School not for theoretical reasons, but through experimentation. Indeed, by training his own subjects, he was able to reproduce—with various degrees of success—the same sophisticated

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[333] Ibid., 192-293; 332.
[334] Ibid., 317. As in Braid's model, this conception presupposes that "the mind has an almost absolute empire over the body. Only, in order for it to be able to exert it, it must be placed in a particular state, akin to sleep." Delboeuf, 337.
[335] Ibid., 318.
[336] Ibid., Ibid.
[337] Ibid., 260. Delboeuf also notes that Charcot's *grand hypnotisme* exists only in the French capital, in the "five or six" hysterics of the Salpêtrière.
[338] Ibid.

phenomena as those demonstrated by Blanche Wittman and the other star subjects at the Salpêtrière.[339] As he concludes, "by imitating the processes used in Paris, I stumbled upon, almost despite myself, on the results of Nancy."[340]

An Homage to Liébeault

In his defense of the Nancy school, Delboeuf takes great care to acknowledge the contribution of Ambroise Auguste Liébeault (1823-1904), a countryside physician who was more concerned with the therapeutic value of hypnosis than the theorization which mostly occupied Charcot.[341]

In *Le Sommeil et les états analogues* (1864), Liébeault attributes the therapeutic effects of magnetism to the concentration of the subject's attention on the organs, and identifies six degrees of hypnotic trance, the depth of which can be measured according to the presence—or absence—of certain factors, such as the rigidity of the limbs, rotation of the arms, and spontaneous appearance of "posthypnotic amnesia."[342] Delboeuf used a different method to check for the presence and depth of hypnosis, testing for the presence analgesia by pricking the subject's skin with needles and using their lack of sensibility as both a means to measure the depth of trance and a strategy to impact their mind, by ratifying the presence of the hypnotic state.

According to Delboeuf's account of his visit to Liébeault's practice in 1888, the therapeutic efficacy of hypnosis seems to rely on two main factors. First of all, it is caused by the effects and content of the physician's verbal suggestion, which Liébeault gave to his patients in a straightforward manner—repeating "identical" and sometimes "monotonous" formulations or

[339] For example, Delboeuf cites an example in which he was able to recreate an *état composé*, where the patient's face, with "both eyes open," would express "love" on one side and "hatred" on the other. As he claims, "a mediocre subject has been trained in a few hours to reproduce the famous three states, the *états dimidés, the états composés,* the transfer of sensibility." Ibid., 275. Similarly, he attributes the therapeutic success of metallotherapy to suggestion, comparing it to the miracle healings of Lourdes: "The patient cures themselves. The application of magnets acts as a form of suggestion, which presents the advantage of having both a mysterious and a scientific aspect." Ibid., 273. In this way, Delboeuf dismissed Charcot's experimentations with magnets as a naïve reproduction of the magnetist's faith in the materiality of the fluid.

[340] Ibid., 261.

[341] A similar parallel could be made in this respect between Freud interest for theory and Ferenczi's *furor sanadi.*

[342] Posthypnotic amnesia refers to the spontaneous or induced forgetting of the content of the hypnotic experience by the subject, which Liébeault attributes to the sudden expansion of the—previously concentrated—attention caused by awakening from the hypnotic state. The Nancy school claimed that amnesia spontaneously appeared after hypnosis and that the use of suggestion was necessary to restore the subject's memory. For Delboeuf, what the Nancy schools defines as spontaneous post-hypnotic amnesia is actually unconsciously or inadvertently induced. For him, on the other hand, "forgetting and remembering are accidental" and there exists no notable difference in the therapeutic action of remembered versus forgotten suggestions. See Delboeuf 327-329 and Gauld, 323.

"affirmations," first of "sleep" and then of symptom remission or progress recovery—often to large groups of patients at once.[343] Second, it is also due to the nonverbal and paraverbal elements largely responsible for the successful implementation of the suggestion and the quality of the therapeutic relation. These are perceived—largely unconsciously—through the physician's tone, behavior, congruence and attitudes. Indeed, Liébeault's therapeutic success was often attributed to his general disposition, to his "ardent, penetrating" tone and the "ardent faith" that he communicated to his patients, to the "confidence" he inspired in them.[344] For Delboeuf and Liébeault, the operator's internal state and *genuine* conviction is a crucial element of therapeutic success: "It is the operator's conviction that is here the lever that will move mountains. Such a conviction is difficult to simulate. At the moment when he is about to be influenced, the subject demonstrates incredible subtlety, and will perceive in you the slightest hint of indecision. If you hesitate, all is lost."[345] Therefore, suggestion does not only impact the subject, conceived as a receptive passive force. Its efficacy also depends on its action upon the operator himself: "if you believe you will fail you shall fail."[346]

In 1882, Bernheim discovered Liébeault's work, who quickly gained fame and recognition as he became the "father" of the Nancy school.[347] Nevertheless, despite Bernheim's indebtedness to his findings, Liébeault's conception and use of hypnosis remained attached to certain elements of the old magnetic model. For example, Liébeault found himself able to cure young children by "simply laying hands on the afflicted region," and famously kept a bottle of "magnetized water" in his clinic, which he sometimes gave to patients to ingest.[348] While this led Liébeault to reconsider the possibility of the existence of the imponderable fluid, it led Bernheim to suggest that he replace it—without the patients' knowledge—with ordinary water.[349] And indeed, in a

[343] Delboeuf, 288. As Gauld observes, Liébeault's practice adapted to the "French peasant" which composed the great majority of his clientele. Gauld, 319.
[344] Ibid., 288-9.
[345] Ibid., 333.
[346] Ibid, 334.
[347] Gauld, 321.
[348] Gauld, 323. Liébeault gave the magnetized water to infants suffering from diarrhea, constipation or vomiting. According to Delboeuf, Liébeault used the water "to content the mothers more than to cure the children. Strangely, the children's condition improved from this singular treatment." Delboeuf, 294. Worth noting in this respect is Liébeault's earlier interest in a religious career.
[349] As Delboeuf notes, Bernheim attributed the curative effects of the water or the physical touch to suggestion—that is, to the infant's sufficient suggestibility and understanding that "he is suffering and that the man who faces him and speaks with his mother wants to (and can) help relieve this suffering." Delboeuf, 295.

striking demonstration and foreshadowing of the Placebo effect, Delboeuf cites the case of a paralytic and insomniac patient who claimed that the water "made her sleep."[350]

1.1.4.3. Hippolyte Bernheim: Suggestive Therapeutics.

After visiting Liébeault's practice in 1882, Hippolyte Bernheim (1840-1919), who was already professor at the faculty of medicine in Nancy, became interested in the phenomenon of hypnotism and decided to investigate it further, both at the Nancy hospital and in his own medical practice. At the height of the debate between his school and the Salpêtrière, Bernheim famously denied the existence of Charcot's three phases of hypnotism and maintained that all of the phenomena produced by the Paris school—and indeed, hypnotic phenomena—can be explained by a single principle: suggestion is the key-stone of the arch of all hypnotic manifestations.[351] In an article published in 1911, Bernheim writes:

> All the phenomena established at the Salpêtrière, the three phases of hypnotism, the neuromuscular hyper excitability of the lethargic phase, the special muscle spasms induced in the so-called somnambulistic phase, and the transfer of magnetism by metals would not exist if the experiments were conducted under conditions that excluded the use of suggestion. In other words, the subjects did only what they knew they should do, either because they had observed these acts performed by other subjects or because they had heard about them, or in one word because the idea of what should be done had been instilled in their brains by means of suggestion. The hypnotism of the Salpêtrière is a cultist type of hypnotism.[352]

To disprove the views of the Salpêtrière, Bernheim used ordinary objects such as stethoscopes, pieces of wood, and so on, announcing that they were magnets to the patient. While the subject's eyes were closed, he touched arbitrary points of the body and made the same kind of verbal suggestions than those of the Paris school, producing the same effects—in a quasi-parodic mode. One can indeed note the irony which permeates the descriptions of such experiments. For example:

> "See here, he said, I will touch the laughter-bump and she will laugh." He touches a random area of the right cheek, the old lady laughs. "Now, I will touch the symmetrical point on the left cheek, she will cry." The old lady weeps and tears stream down her face. "If I touch this spot on the forehead, she will start to pray." The patient joins her hands and recites her prayers out loud. There lie the physical phenomena of the adepts of the Salpêtrière.[353]

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[350] Delboeuf, 295.
[351] Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1889)*,* 447. See also 1947 edition, translated by Christian Herter (New York: London Book Company, 1947), 89-91.
[352] Bernheim, *De la suggestion,* quoted in M. Tinterow, ed. *Foundations of Hypnosis* (Springfield; Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher, 1970) 430. It seems that the term "cultist" here might be a mistranslation of the French "un hypnotisme de culture," which Bernheim uses in chapter XV of *De la Suggestion.* See Hippolyte Bernheim, "École de la Salpêtrière," in *De la Suggestion* (Paris: BNP, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central. Accessed August 24, 2020), 112.
[353] Quoted in Delboeuf, 326.

The Power of Suggestion

In *Suggestive Therapeutics* (1889), Bernheim formulates his radical conception, in clear opposition with the Salpêtrière principles, which brought about a sharp turn in the theory of hypnotism and mirrors the sharpness that the Puységurian revision imposed on the Mesmeric model.[354]

First of all, in Bernheim's account, hypnotism is clearly dissociated from the pathological. It is described as "an ordinary sleep or torpor that can be induced in everyone," a "quiet, beneficial condition."[355] Bernheim thus typically began hypnotic sessions with a reassuring introductory moment—later on called "framing"—which serves to defuse or dissolve the patient's apprehension and potentially limiting beliefs about hypnosis. For Bernheim, this moment has one principal function: to "banish from [the patient's] mind the idea of magnetism and the somewhat mysterious fear that attaches to that unknown condition."[356]

Furthermore, in his contention that "it makes little difference what sort of gesture is made" during the induction of hypnosis, Bernheim addressed a double blow, to the tradition of magnetic passes on the one hand, and to Charcot's emphasis on hysterogenic zones on the other.[357] Like Liébeault's, Bernheim's method of induction consisted in simply suggesting the idea of sleep in a "commanding tone," until it took hold of the patient's mind and produced somatic effects such as the heaviness of the eyelids. With patients displaying signs of resistance, Bernheim took care to specify that "the hypnotic influence may exist without sleep; many patients are hypnotized although they do not sleep. ... The suggestion may be beneficial without sleep."[358] Indeed, according to Bernheim, as seen in the demonstrations of stage magnetists such as Donato, "the aptitude for realizing suggestive phenomena is not always proportional to the depth of the sleep."[359]

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[354] Hippolyte Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics: A Treatise on the Nature and Uses of Hypnotism* (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1889).

[355] Bernheim, Ibid., 430.

[356] Ibid., 430. Bernheim's model thus underlines how the manipulation of the patient's expectations and belief system is crucial in the constitution and induction of the hypnotic state as well as in its therapeutic efficacy.

[357] Indeed, for him, "passes or gazing at the eyes or fingers of the operator are only useful in concentrating the attention." The essence of the induction lies in the repetition of auditory suggestions of sleep. Bernheim, Ibid., 440.

[358] Although here the reason seems more technical than theoretical, it will be remembered as one of Bernheim's central ideas.

[359] Bernheim, Ibid., 439-441. The question of the correlation between suggestibility and depth of trance still being debated to this day. See Heap et. al., *The Highly Hypnotizable Person. Theoretical, experimental and clinical issues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

In the doctrine of the Nancy school, there does not seem to be such a thing as a "non-susceptible" subject. Indeed, in Bernheim's descriptions, one finds only "anxious" subjects, or "people who make it a point of honor to show that they cannot be hypnotized"—which in no way indicates that they are not receptive. Rather, they "do not know how to put themselves into the psychical state necessary to realize their suggestion; they refuse to accept it—consciously or unconsciously—and instead, "oppose a kind of counter-suggestion" to that of the operator.[360] Most of the time, a "suggestive education" can correct these "resistant" cases, and deep states become attainable after two or three sessions, during which the subject learns how to gradually enter hypnotic trance.[361] This strong emphasis on the activity, education and abilities of the subject shits authority away from the "power" of the operator. Instead, emphasis is placed on the power of language and verbal suggestion. Bernheim confirms this point in a striking manner when he notes that hypnosis can be produced by correspondence—by reading a letter—or on the telephone.[362]

Unlike what is conveyed in conceptions of the hypnotic state as essentially lethargic, Bernheim also strongly rejects conceptions of the hypnotic subject as purely passive, stressing the fact that the subject is not unconscious: "I cannot repeat too often that the hypnotized subject is not a lifeless corpse ... he is conscious, and often shows signs of life. We may see him laugh ... He may comment upon his condition," etc.[363]

Finally, in stark opposition to the Charcotian tendency to systematize and classify, Bernheim underlined the numerous variations that come with the examination of single, individual case-studies, rather than nosographical categories and pathological types. Indeed, for Bernheim, "hypnotism manifests itself in different subjects in different ways," and "each sleeper has, so to speak, his own special personality."[364] Although—in response to Liébeault's classification—Bernheim distinguishes several degrees of depth of trance, Bernheim specifies that this purely theoretical classification should not overshadow the individual differences and the spectrum of depth that exist in empirical cases. Although he did argue that "suggestibility is more decided if there is amnesia upon waking," Bernheim also distinguished depth of trance from the concept of

[360] Bernheim, Ibid., 439.
[361] Ibid., 443.
[362] For the latter example, Bernheim specifies, "as M. Liégeois has shown." Ibid.
[363] Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 452.
[364] Ibid., 447; 453.

suggestibility, claiming that "docility to suggestion and the ease with which diverse phenomena are provoked are not always in proportion to the depth of the hypnotic sleep."[365]

In this way, the Nancy school anticipated twentieth-century social-psychological explanations of hypnosis which reject the idea that a special "state" must be induced for the therapeutic efficacy of suggestion to occur. In these accounts—discussed at the end of this Chapter—there is no need to posit the existence of an isolatable, cognitive, hypnotic "state." Rather, the phenomenon of hypnotic trance can be explained by ordinary, natural psychological processes, which involve the implicit, contractual collaboration between subject and operator, as well as the expectations and active participation of the subject. One of the biggest contributions of Bernheim's model, therefore, was the depathologization of the hypnotic state, and the insistence on the centrality of suggestion, in all hypnotic phenomena. This conception was radically opposed to Charcot's model, as well as Janet's pathologizing conception of hypnotism, which we will examine in the following section.

1.1.5. Dissociation and Pathology.

With his seminal work on psychological automatism, Pierre Janet (1959-1947) is considered by some historians as being one of the main inventors of dynamic psychiatry.[366] His work was revived in the 1990s, when interest in cases of multiple personalities spiked, and Janet was considered as a pioneer of the "neodissociationist" theories of hypnotism, to which we will return further on.

Janet's doctoral thesis in philosophy, *L'Automatisme psychologique,* was published in 1889 and constitutes of the most important contributions to the theory of hypnosis of the late

[365] Ibid., 448; *De la Suggestion dans l'état hypnotique et dans l'état de veille* (Paris: Doin, 1884), 9. As noted higher up, Delboeuf disagreed with the former idea, arguing that posthypnotic amnesia is always consciously or unconsciously suggested or induced, rather than spontaneous.

[366] Ellenberger, 331. Pierre Janet was born in Paris in 1859. After studying at the École Normale Supérieure, he became professor of philosophy at the lycées of Châteauroux (1882-1883) and Le Havre (1883-1889), where he wrote his doctoral dissertation, *L'automatisme psychologique*. After its publication in 1889, Janet started his medical studies—where he spent time with neurological and psychiatric patients in Charcot's ward at the Salpêtrière, focusing mainly on hysteria, before receiving his medical degree in 1893. In 1898 he was appointed professor of psychology at the Sorbonne, and in 1902, of experimental psychology at the Collège de France. From the beginning of his career, Janet "was careful to say that he carried out his experiments and derived his conclusions as a psychologist, not a physiologist." Crabtree, 314. As Gauld notes, although very strong, Janet's influence is mostly noted in how his work shaped the ideas of others: "Jung, Bleuler, Adler and the early Freud were all more or less indebted to him." Due to a resurgence of interest in the question of multiple personalities, in the 1990s his work was revived," and he was "often hailed as a forerunner of the [twentieth-century] 'neodissociationist' approach to hypnotism. Gauld, 380; 375.

nineteenth century, as well as a "highly original approach to the theory and therapy of the neuroses."[367] Janet used hypnosis both as a therapeutic tool and a means of investigation in his theoretical description of dissociation, "subconscious" mental activity, and hysteria. Despite his pathologizing conception of hypnosis, much more than Charcot, Janet's work has been considered as the first original attempt to produce a psychological, rather than purely physiological, explanation of the neuroses.[368] With his concept of psychological automatism, Janet gave a central formulation of the hypnotic unconscious, rejecting physiological explanations of hysteria as "defective functioning of the nervous system."[369] Indeed, he inaugurated what is referred to as the "dual consciousness" paradigm, which posited the potential existence of two or more "streams" of consciousness in a same subject.[370] Conversely, against spiritualist theories, Janet "believed that mediumship, thought reading, divination, table turning and all the other phenomena sometimes attributed to the interventions of spiritual beings could be adequately explained as manifestations of subconscious activity."[371] Describing them as forms of "partial" automatism, Janet thus also naturalized the occult by explaining its manifestations as subconscious mental processes.

Psychological Automatism and Subconscious Mental Phenomena.

According to Janet, the basic phenomena of psychology is automatic activity, an elementary activity which is spontaneous, determined, seemingly automatic, and yet "conscious"[372]—hence its "psychological" dimension.[373] Indeed, Janet conceived automatic activities—such as those found in hypnotic and hysteric subjects, including phenomena such as automatic writing—as being not only therapeutically useful but also, in a sense, "intelligent." For

[367] Gauld, 369.
[368] Crabtree, 326.
[369] Indeed, Janet "did not agree that automatic actions were merely mechanical reflexes of the brain." Because hypnotic subjects can speak, resolve problems, show sympathies and antipathies, and even refuse to obey the commands of the operator, hypnotic phenomena "are not the actions of an automatic puppet." Crabtree, 326; 315.
[370] Although the expression "stream of consciousness' is often linked to William James' 1890 notion of "stream of thought," Janet spoke of the conscious life of subjects as being potentially composed of various "parallel currents," which could alternate or, in serious pathological cases, exist simultaneously and independently from one another. For instance, Janet writes that his patient Lucie had "three parallels streams one under the other." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 335. His patient Léonie (Madame B.) also had three: Léonie, Léontine and Léonore. Another of his patients, Marie had four or five. Ibid., 334. This model of multiple personalities found—or induced—in the hysteric or neurotic patient was then to become generalized in turn-of-the-century practices of hypnotism, and found in other countries, including Great Britain and the United States.
[371] Crabtree, 326.
[372] "In fact, it is performed with the participation of consciousness, *but not the ordinary consciousness of the individual."* Crabtree, 315, italics in original.
[373] Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 1-3.

him, "we have the same reasons for attributing consciousness to them as to intelligent activities carried on by persons in a normal state," except that in this case, the consciousness involved is "largely separated from and inaccessible to the ordinary waking consciousness."[374] Indeed, psychological automatic phenomena are produced by a subconscious intelligence which remains operative under the ordinary consciousness, "enjoying continual existence outside the experimental periods."[375]

In this context, Janet defines an unconscious act as "an action having all the characteristics of a psychological act, save one: that it is always unknown to the person himself who executes it at the moment of its execution."[376] His concept of the unconscious—or as he preferred, of "subconscious" mental activity—thus strongly differs from the Freudian Unconscious. In Janet's conception, the existence of second *consciousness* is involved, one which is "awake," even when it is out of sight of the main consciousness' awareness. In this sense, it is non-conscious but not "unconscious": it remains active, "below the normal consciousness of an individual."[377]

With the case of his patient "Lucie," Janet was able to formulate his theory of dual consciousness early on.[378] Indeed, as Janet observed, when Lucie was placed in a state of artificial somnambulism, a second consciousness, who called herself "Adrienne" was revealed. This second consciousness, whom Janet "contacted" by using two of his most famous techniques—automatic writing[379] and "distraction"[380]—revealed that she was responsible for Lucie's hysteric symptoms, and carried traumatic memories that Lucie was unaware of.[381] Adrienne—who herself suffered from no symptoms—revealed that she was also responsible for carrying out the posthypnotic

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[374] Gauld, 371.
[375] Ibid., 372.
[376] Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 225. In his 1888 paper published in the *Revue Philosophique*, he distinguishes four kinds of unconscious acts: those produced by posthypnotic suggestions, anesthesia, his technique of "distraction" and finally, spontaneous unconscious acts, such as those seen in hysteria.
[377] Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 265.
[378] In the years 1886-1889.
[379] For example, with his patient Léonie, Janet places a pencil in her hand and asks questions (Where are we? What is your age?): "The hand stirs and writes the answer on the paper, without, during this time, Léonie ceasing to speak of other things. In this way I have made her carry out arithmetical operations which were sufficiently correct; I have made her write quite long answers which clearly showed a fairly well-developed intelligence." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 244.
[380] Janet, "Les Actes inconscients et le dédoublement de la personnalité pendant le somnambulisme provoqué," in *Revue Philosophique,* 22, (1886): 589. While the patient was engaged in conversation with another person (distracted), Janet would address their second personality in a low voice, either giving her commands such as post-hypnotic suggestions or asking her to respond in writing without her main conscious awareness being involved. Janet's technique of "distraction" is still used today to create partial or "total" dissociation in the hypnotic subject.
[381] Lucie's symptoms included anesthesia of the whole body, inability to feel physical contact, pressure, or temperature changes, convulsions and severe headaches.

suggestions that Lucie responded to in her waking state.[382] This is important in the sense that the second consciousness knows more than the waking consciousness: "Adrienne always saw what Lucie was unable to see. Adrienne had knowledge of [traumatic] life events for which Lucie had naturally induced amnesia."[383]As therapeutic cure is brought about, and the subject returns to health, the second consciousness is no longer needed, and can disappear.[384] In 1887, Janet formulates the essence of the dual consciousness paradigm more clearly:

> If a phenomenon is not conscious, it cannot be a psychological event ... A reasoning can only occur in the head of a person if he is conscious ... Why is the reasoning not known by the somnambulist or the hysteric? Because a psychological phenomenon can be conscious and yet not attached by association to the group of sensations and memories that constitute the idea of an "I." ... Or indeed it could be associated with other facts equally separated from all consciousness and form, as it were, a second personality, as we see in the case of Adrienne.[385]

As indicated in this passage, Janet conceives of a personality as a grouping together, a synthesis of psychological phenomena which experiences itself as an "I."[386] These can be associated with a second, "conscious" personality that may act of its own accord, even against the beliefs or desires of the main personality.[387] An idea can thus be conscious, yet not associated with the group of sensations and memories that make up the "I." When it becomes associated to another group or system that is complex enough—which has been sufficiently "fed by new experiences"—and

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[382] In this sense, "Lucie did not forget the post-hypnotic suggestions given her; in fact, she never knew them." Crabtree, 309. Although he didn't attribute the existence of the second personalities to suggestion on the part of the therapist, in 1889, Janet acknowledged the impact of the operator on the subject's second personality: "The second personality who is being born undergoes the influence and manners of his magnetizer as an infant undergoes the influence of his parents. It takes on the habits, manners and beliefs which have been inspired in him, almost without knowing or intending it. As the magnetizer, so the somnambulist. … Show me a somnambulist and I will immediately know who induces the sleep state and the opinions and beliefs, scientific or otherwise." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 127-128.

[383] Crabtree, 311. Indeed, "Lucie knew nothing of Adrienne, since ideas and sensations associated with Adrienne never reached Lucie's consciousness." Crabtree, 314. For example, when experimenting with negative hallucinations on cards, Janet found that "it was Adrienne, free of all hallucinations, who saw the cards and their markings and guided the blocking of Lucie's perception." Janet, "L'anesthésie systématisée et la dissociation des phénomènes psychologique," *Revue Philosophique*, 23 (1887): 457-59.

[384] Janet, "Les Actes inconscients et le dédoublement de la personnalité pendant le somnambulisme provoqué," in *Revue Philosophique,* 22 (1886): 588-92.

[385] "L'anesthésie systématisée," 462.

[386] "When … psychological phenomena are united, ordinarily there is produced in the mind a new, very important reality: their unity, noted and understood, gives birth to a particular *judgment* that one calls the ideas of the 'I'… Judgment … synthesizes different acts, establishes their unity and … forms a new idea: that of personality." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 117.

[387] Janet, "Les Actes inconscients et la mémoire pendant le somnambulisme provoqué" in *Revue Philosophique* 25 (1888): 249-54. The hysteric experiences successive states of consciousness that are distinct from one another: "The systems of psychological phenomena that form the successive personalities of somnambulism do not disappear upon awakening, but subsist, more or less complete, below normal consciousness, which they can change and disturb in a most singular way." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 365.

begins to solidify, the second consciousness or personality begins to form.[388] Otherwise, it can produce a mere *partial* automatism, as described higher up, such as automatic writing.[389] With this account, Janet was able to explain hysterical symptoms as "the manifestation of a dissociated group of ideas crystallized in a personality."[390]

The Pathologization of Hypnosis

Janet used hypnosis in three main ways to cure patients, most of which suffered from traumatic memories. First, hypnosis could be used to restore traumatic, dissociated memories from to the patient's main consciousness, which would sometimes need fortification in order to bear them. Second, it could be used to "erase" the pathogenic memory by inducing hypnotic amnesia. Finally, it could be used to transform the memory, rendering it innocuous for the subject.[391]

Disagreeing with Bernheim, Janet defined hypnosis "not [as] a state of heightened suggestibility, itself produced by suggestion" but rather, as "simply the artificial production of a state of hysterical somnambulism in a person liable to such attacks."[392] As was the case with

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[388] Crabtree, 320. Despite this theoretical "dematerialization," on a technical level, Janet still used the methods of the old magnetists, in his "mixture of verbal suggestion and mesmeric passes," to induce the state of artificial somnambulism. Gauld, 377.

[389] Janet distinguished between states of total, and partial automatism. Total psychological automatism is "a disposition a mode of mental being, of the whole subject," who is either completely in the waking state, or in somnambulism, or in delirium, but "never half in one state or half in another." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 223. Total automatisms include a whole range of states, "from catalepsies, to hysteric somnambulism and fugue states to alternating personalities." Gauld, 371. Partial automatisms, which are "isolated from the total consciousness of the individual, and continu[e] to develop by themselves on their own account," range from catalepsy of a limb to hysterical contractures and paralyses, from automatic writing and speaking to occult phenomena such as pendulum swinging, planchette writing, water divining, etc. See Janet, *L'Automatisme psychologique,* 224; Gauld, 371.

[390] Crabtree, 314.

[391] For example, Janet used hypnosis in the case of Justine, a woman who nursed other patients dying from cholera and suffered from hysterical crises during which she hallucinated corpses and cried out 'Cholera it's taking me!' Because in her case, the *reintegration* of the memories failed, Janet had to resort to some "striking[ly] creative" transformations of the traumatic material: "A particularly unpleasant greenish putrefying corpse was clad and turned into a rather comic Chinese general whom Justine had seen at the Universal Exposition. Finally, he eliminated the idea of cholera by suggesting that the Chinese general was called 'Cho Lé Ra'." Gauld, 375; Janet, *Névroses et idées fixes* (1898; Paris: Félix Alcan, 1904)*,* 156-212.

[392] Gauld, 377. Janet's conception of suggestion was opposed to Bernheim's, for whom "almost any idea which penetrates the mind and produces an effect qualifies as a suggestion." Gauld, 375. For Janet this definition is "far too broad" and fails to capture the essence of the phenomenon. For him, "about true suggestions there is something abnormal and pathological." Gauld, 375. Furthermore, for Janet, the hysteric patient obeys hypnotic suggestions almost impulsively, he "ceases to question himself, ceases to call up new pros and cons, ceases to surround the evoked idea by other ideas. … [The suggested idea] remains alone, isolated and powerful. It is then transformed by automatic assent, so that it becomes a suggestion. The curtailment of the mental field, monoideism, results from the disappearance of all other ideas and from the survival of the primary idea … which has now become impulsive." Janet, *Psychological Healing: A Historical and Clinical Study.* Vol. 1. (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 273.

Charcot, according to Janet, "there is no reason for regarding hypnosis as in any way distinct from hysterical somnambulism."[393]

For Janet, subconscious acts such as those found in hysteria or hypnotism occur in individuals who are in a state of mental disintegration (*désagregation*),[394] which occurs when the "mental force" required to produce a healthy mental synthesis is lacking.[395] Indeed, in a healthy subject, the mind has the ability to unite diverse experience in a single grouping, through an internal synthesizing force.[396] Weakness of the synthesizing force, on the other hand, leads to a plurality of "groupings" and to disaggregation.[397] The hysteric patient, who has a particularly weak "synthesizing force," does not have the mental strength required to assimilate traumatic experience. Instead of being integrated, these events form secondary subconscious centers of synthesis which ultimately, can take on the form of personalities.[398]

Furthermore, in hysteria or hypnosis, the subject's "field of consciousness" is "narrowed" or "shrunk": it is "filled with one relatively simple sensation, one remembrance, a small group of motor images, and cannot contain others at the same time."[399] According to Janet, this restriction creates heightened suggestibility. In the pathological or diminished field of consciousness, "ideas,

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[393] Gauld, 377.

[394] Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologiqu*e, 282.

[395] This "moral weakness" can be temporary, and induced by fatigue, drugs, or strong emotions. Indeed, for Janet, emotion "has an action that dissolves the mind, diminishes the synthesis and make it miserable for a moment." Janet 1898, 457.

[396] Crabtree, 319. In our normal state, we connect ideas that appear with "the enormous mass of other recollections, of other images, which constitute out personality. They have their place they play their part in the great system, but they are not isolated and independent, and their development is restrained by the development of all other thoughts." Janet, *The Mental State of Hystericals* (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1901), 274. In Janet's case histories, "occasionally, a secondary stream of consciousness may be superior to, or more highly endowed with critical faculties than, the 'normal' consciousness, and then it may be less rather than more susceptible to suggestion than the latter. …When the last level of somnambulism is reached, there are no subconscious acts and there can be no hypnosis." Gauld 378.

[397] As Crabtree points out, for Janet dissociation does not involve the "undoing" of an already existing unity (there is no breaking away, or splitting off, of one group from another, nothing is being undone.). Rather, it involves "the immediate assignment of a phenomenon, *at the moment when it occurs,* 'to one system and not to the other." Dissociation, then, is not a dis-association: "Rather, psychic events are grouped as they occur." Therefore, if the main consciousness does not have a knowledge of an event, it is because "it never did. … Forgetting is not involved." Crabtree, 313.

[398] Crabtree, 320. For Janet, this weakness is congenital (the exhaustion underlying hysteria is considered a hereditary weakness or predisposition) and in this sense, hysteria is essentially incurable. This explains why hypnosis is used first and foremost for symptom removal or relief. However, although in hysteria, the cerebral exhaustion is "frequently due to constitutional factors," there are often also "precipitating circumstances, usually of an emotive and stress-inducing kind, which finally snap the trail hold which the subject's mind has upon the elements it has to far managed to synthesize": it may be triggered or intensified by factors such as fatigue, strong emotion, intoxicants or anesthetics. See Gauld 1992, 373; 379. Like Charcot, Janet struggled to explain why Bernheim could induce hypnosis in non-hysteric subjects.

[399] Janet, *The Mental State of Hystericals*, 503.

once inserted, may develop in relative isolation without any of the normal restraints; hence the automatic working out of suggestions, and the characteristic susceptibility of the hysteric to both hetero- and autosuggestion."[400] For Janet, it is thus monoideism that explains the pathological functioning of hypnotic suggestions: "Like a morbid virus, it has been sown in [the mind] and developed in a place within [the subject's] person that he cannot reach. It acts subconsciously, troubles the conscious mind, and provokes all the symptoms of hysteria and insanity."[401] Therefore, by associating it to pathology and hysteria, Janet's conception of hypnosis as automatism was closer to Charcot's than to Bernheim's.[402] Like Charcot, for whom "one would almost be justified in maintaining that hypnotism is a manifestation of hysteria," Janet also rejected the idea that hypnosis can be experienced by healthy subjects.[403]

Towards Freud?

In this sense, Janet's contribution lies less in his conception of hypnosis than in attempt to produce a psychological explanation—and cure—of hysteria.[404] This psychological explanation

[400] Gauld, 376.

[401] Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 457. As we have noted higher up, monoideism was already present in Braid's notion of "fixed" or dominant idea. As Gauld shows, it was also prefigured in the work of Charles Richet, Liébeault, and Charcot before Janet.

[402] However, although he pathologized hypnosis like Charcot, Janet believes that weakness of the synthesizing force was at the heart of *all* psychological pathology, hysteria being but *one* of them. Unlike Charcot, for who hysteria accounted for all dissociated phenomena, including hypnosis, Janet believed the opposite: "it is not hysteria which constitutes a terrain favorable to hypnotism, but it is hypnotic sensibility that constitutes favorable terrain for hysteria and other illnesses." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 451-53.

[403] Joseph Babinski, *Hypnotisme et hystérie: du role de l'hypnotisme en thérapeutique.* Paris: G. Masson, 1891), 17. For Janet, in "the state of perfect psychological health, the power to synthesize being very great, all psychological phenomena, whatever the origin, are united in the same personal perception, and consequently the second personality does not exist. In such a state there would be no… suggestibility and no possibility of producing a somnambulism, since one could not develop subconscious phenomena, which would not exist." Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, 336. After leaving the Salpêtrière, Alfred Binet parted with Janet's idea of hypnosis as pathology, and studied the "plurality of consciousness in healthy subjects." As Binet describes it, "we witness the awakening of an unconscious intelligence; we can even communicate with it and direct it, hold a coherent conversation with it, measure the extent of its memory and the acuteness of its perception." Alfred Binet, *Les altérations de la personnalité* (Paris: Germer Baillère, 1892), 97. According to Binet, these experiments were "amply sufficient to demonstrate the possibility of rousing an unconscious personality in healthy persons or those who are very nearly so." Binet, Ibid., 245; Gauld, 381.

[404] Another well-known example is the case of Marie, who at age 19 was brought to the hospital in Le Havre as she experienced a series of frightening hysterical symptoms linked to her menstrual period. For Janet, Marie's case "demonstrated the importance of subconscious fixed ideas [here, the idea that menstruation is shameful, and that it must and can be stopped with cold water] and the role they play in certain psychical ideas as well as moral illnesses." Janet 1898, 440. Using hypnotic regression, Janet re-created the circumstances of Marie's first menstruation at age 13, assuring her that it had lasted for 3 days and gone well (when in reality she had jumped into a tub of freezing water and stopped it). He also modified a traumatic memory of her witnessing, at age 16, an old woman falling down the stairs and dying (the image was changed into one where the woman regained her balance and did not die). As Janet observes, Marie's terror ceased and after 5 months, she returned to health. However, as Leys shows in *Trauma, a*

was further extended to the naturalization of phenomena such as demonic possession, which, like hysterical symptoms, can be explained by auto-suggestion, subconscious *idées fixes* and monoideism. A telling case in this respect is that of Achille, one of Janet's patients who suddenly fell ill and believed he was possessed by the devil. Under hypnosis—using distraction and automatic writing—the "devil" revealed that Achille's symptoms were due to a recent sexual infidelity to his wife. In other terms, demonic possession, like the hysterical symptom, was due to an autosuggestion which in this case, was caused by guilt.[405] Using hypnosis, Janet recreated the Achille's problematic memory, deconstructing and modifying it with the techniques of "dissociation of ideas" and "substitution":

> It is the very memory of the transgression the Achille must be made to forget. This operation is far from easy. … An idea, a memory can be considered a system of images that one can destroy by separating them, by altering them once isolated, by substituting in the composite such and such a partial image for those that exist. … The memory of his transgression was transformed in every way through suggested hallucinations. Finally, his wife was herself evoked by hallucination at the proper moment, come to give a full pardon to this most unfortunate guilty spouse.[406]

As tempted as one might be to see in this case a foreshadowing of the Freudian superego, Janet's hypnotic unconscious, based on the concepts of dissociation and psychological automatism, differs strongly from the Freudian model, in both its 1900 theorization and the later topographical model, which are based on the notions of unconscious drives and fantasies, as well as repression. Nevertheless, the *fin-de-siècle* formulations of the hypnotic unconscious that we have examined in the work of Charcot, Bernheim and Janet can also be thought of as paving the way towards the formulation of the psychoanalytic unconscious.

Indeed, James Strachey has pointed out that despite his "abandonment" of hypnosis as a therapeutic tool and of suggestive techniques in the constitution of psychoanalysis, Freud "never hesitated throughout his life to express his sense of gratitude to hypnosis."[407] Indeed, in Lecture XXVIII of the *Introductory Lectures,* Freud describes psychoanalysts as the heirs of hypnosis,

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Genealogy, in this case, the therapeutic cure depends on the "erasure" and modification, rather than the integration, of the pathogenic memory. Indeed, as Leys observes, it is the excision, the *forgetting* of the traumatic memory that cures Marie, not its retrieval or narration: "according to Janet's first account of the case and contrary to the ingrained beliefs of many of his commentators, Marie was cured not by the recovery of memory but by the excision of her imputed or reconstructed trauma." See Leys, *Trauma a Genealogy* and "Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 20, No. 4 (1994): 650.

[405] Here Janet's case comes close to illustrating the function that Freud's superego will take on. Unlike Freud, however, Janet's goal is to transform the problematic memory, rather than bring it to conscious awareness.

[406] Janet, *Névroses et idées fixes,* 2nd ed. 1:404. According to Janet, eight years after the suggestive treatment, Achille was still healthy. Ibid., 1:379.

[407] James Strachey. "Editor's Introduction to Papers on Hypnotism and Suggestion," in *SE*, 1:68.

who "do not forget how much encouragement and theoretical clarification we owe to it."[408] However, in the same lectures, he also makes his famous statement according to which "psychoanalysis proper began when I dispensed with the help of hypnosis."[409]

In what follows, I will therefore discuss the complex ways in which Freud was indebted to the French hypnotists of the 1880s, especially Charcot, and navigated the transition from using hypnosis in his early work on hysteria, to breaking with it in order to bring about the birth of "psychoanalysis proper." As I will argue, although this break was crucial in establishing the scientific ambitions for analysis, it did not end the history of hypnosis, which reemerged with its "germ" intact, as Janet put it in 1924, and lives on to this day.

1.2. Hypnosis and the Unconscious

1.2.1. From Suggestion to Repression: The Transition Toward Psychoanalysis

As Isabelle Stengers and Roxanne Lapidus have shown, the relations between hypnosis and psychoanalysis cannot be examined without mentioning the question of power.[410] Indeed, power is at play both in a theoretical model's relation its ancestry and in the authority with which rational discourse can endow itself, becoming in turn an instrument of power. According to Stengers' argument, whereas the hypnotist has systematically been accused of "usurping" his power over the subject, the analyst is often exempt from such investigations. For Stengers, however, power can also be found at the heart of the analytic edifice—conferred by Freud to the analytic posture which gives itself "the privilege of judging the old psycho-therapeutic techniques" and "the ability to measure and evaluate what these techniques were about: wishful thinking and suggestion, theorized as the effects of transference."[411] Examining the relations between hypnosis and psychoanalysis then, brings up the "question, ultimately, of the power of a theory in the face of what it claims to judge, and the conditions of that power."[412] By discussing the dynamics which

[408] Freud, *"Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,"* (1916-1917) in *SE* 16: 462. Similarly, in 1914, Freud writes: "We must still be grateful to the old hypnotic technique for having brought before us single psychical processes of analysis in an isolated or schematic form. Only this could have given us the courage ourselves to create more complicated situations in the analytic treatment and to keep them clear before us." Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II," in *SE* 12:148.
[409] Freud, "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis," (1917), in *SE,* 16: 292.
[410] Stengers, Isabelle and Lapidus, Roxanne, "The Deceptions of Power: Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis," *SubStance* 19, no. 2/3, Issue 62/63 (1990): 81-91.
[411] Stengers and Lapidus, "The Deceptions of Power," 81.
[412] Ibid, 81.

led to Freud's "cutting the cord" with hypnosis, in this section, I will investigate both aspects of this power relation: on the one hand, it can refer—as Stengers and Lapidus do—to the institution of analytic power *as theory*, but on the other hand, it can also illuminate the power that hypnosis exerted on Freud's early years—the power of his loyalty towards the Salpêtrière school and the intensity of the personal, quasi-hypnotic fascination that Charcot exerted over him in Paris in 1885-1886.

1.2.1.1. Freud's Fascination for the Master

Freud's theoretical debt to Charcot is widely known.[413] In the *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift,* in 1893, Freud salutes Charcot in a contribution that, although it appears to create historical continuity between Master and pupil, also implicitly relegates Charcot's model into the past.[414] In this sense, although the Freudian "cutting of the cord" was first and foremost a laudatory gesture, on the other hand—clothed in the image of scientific continuity, discovery, and progress—it also contained the essential ambivalence towards the father-object. In this sense, it was both an homage and a death blow, which in a single gesture of separation, announced the birth of psychoanalysis through the *rejection* of its "primitive" parent, hypnosis.[415]

Questions of identification, ambivalence and aggression are far from anecdotal when one examines the birth of analysis and the gesture with which it occurred. Freud himself, in multiple occasions, including in the preface to Bernheim's *De la Suggestion,* invokes the fact that "in scientific matters it is always experience, and never authority without experience, that gives the final verdict."[416] However, beyond its theoretical impact, Freud's fascination for the "great personal influence which Charcot evidently exercised" also played a part in the diversion of his scientific interests from neurology to psychopathology.[417] This emphasis on an influence which is

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[413] Freud worked at the Salpêtrière under Charcot from October 1885 to February 1886. See Strachey, "Editor's Note to 'Charcot'," in *SE* 3: 8.

[414] Sigmund Freud, "Charcot" (1893), in *SE* 3: 7-23. Indeed, the very idea of transmission points both toward the death of the master and the living-on of the future which he birthed.

[415] Although our main focus is on the phenomenon of hypnosis, the Freudian death blow also marks the beginning of the "disappearance of hysteria." As Mark Micale notes, almost immediately upon the death of Charcot, "the nineteenth-century pan-diagnosis of hysteria began to break apart under its own weight, and the many clinical states that it had contained began to scatter." Mark Micale, **"**On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria. A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis," *Isis* 84, no. 3 (September 1993): 526.

[416] Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion,*" (1888), in *SE,* 1:76. This question of scientific vs. historical authority is a problem that is not only complex, but also magnified by the question of hypnotic influence.

[417] Strachey, "Editor's Note to 'Charcot'," in *SE* 3:3-4. As Freud wrote in a letter to his future wife in 1885, "I think I am changing a great deal. I will tell you in detail what is affecting me. Charcot, who is one of the greatest of physicians and a man whose common sense is touched by genius, is simply uprooting my aims and opinions. I sometimes come

not merely intellectual but also personal and embodied comes up again in the language of Freud's "Report on My Studies in Paris and Berlin."[418] Indeed, in his report, the young Freud mentions the "attraction of such a personality" as a factor that led him to restrict his visits to a single hospital and to seek instruction "from one single man," singled out from the multiple other potential authority figures.[419] During his five month stay, Freud's scientific experience was thus also profoundly intertwined with the power of human rapport: "what seems to me to have been of greater value than this positive gain in experience was the stimulus which I received … from my constant scientific and personal contact with Professor Charcot."[420] Under the spell of the fascinating figure, Freud writes that "like every other foreigner in a similar position, [he] left the Salpêtrière as Charcot'*s* unqualified admirer."[421]

In the preface to the German translation of Charcot's *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System,* the vocabulary is similar, drawing on affective terms.[422] In the preface of Charcot's *Leçons Du Mardi De La Salpêtrière,* Freud even employs the lexical field of magic—the very field that later on, analysis will have to banish. Describing Charcot's Tuesday demonstrations, he writes: "It was then that—spellbound by the narrator's artistry no less than by the observer's penetration—we listened to the little stories which showed how a medical experience had led to a new discovery."[423] In Freud's description the past seems to "come alive" and revives the powerful experience of Charcot's lectures, emphasizing the neurologist's hypnotic qualities:

> These lectures present so accurate a picture of Charcot's manner of *speaking* and thinking that, for anyone who has once sat among his audience, *the memory of the Master's voice* and looks *comes alive once more* and the precious hours return in which *the magic of a great personality bound his hearer irrevocably* to the interests and problems of neuropathology.[424]

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out of his lectures as though I were coming out of Notre Dame, with a new idea of perfection. But he exhausts me; when I come away from him I no longer have any desire to work at my own silly things; it is three whole days since I have done any work, and I have no feelings of guilt. My brain is sated, as if I had spent an evening at the theater." In *SE,* 3:8.

[418] Freud, Sigmund. "Report on My Studies in Paris and Berlin," in *Pre-Psycho-Analytic Publications and Unpublished Drafts* (1886-1899), *SE* 1:3-15.

[419] Freud, "Report on my Studies," 8.

[420] Ibid., 9-10, emphasis added.

[421] Ibid., 10, emphasis added.

[422] For example, "my initial *bewilderment* at the findings of Charcot's new investigations…" See Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Charcot's *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System,"* (1886), *SE,* 1: 20.

[423] Freud, "Preface and Footnotes to the Translation of Charcot's *Tuesday Lectures*" (1892), in *SE,* 1: 135.

[424] Ibid., 135, emphasis added.

The emphasis on the Master's speech and its "binding" powers further confirms the analogy between Charcot "on stage," and the hypnotist. Similarly, in the *Second Lecture*, Freud employs the trope of the magic spell to qualify the fascination that he and Breuer experienced in 1893: "we were completely *under the spell* of Charcot's researches."[425] Without placing too much weight—or power—on the metaphor of magic spells and hypnotic fascination, one can nevertheless note the lingering of affective, hypnotic vocabulary which Freud, in his faithful commitment to the intellectual attitude of the *Aufklarung,* will strive to evacuate, and which, according to the narrative of the foundational myth of the birth of analysis, has no place, even at the heart of the young Freud's initial interest in hysteria.

1.2.1.2. Freud's Early Use of Hypnosis: From Direct Suggestion to the Cathartic Method.

This loyalty continued throughout the period of the Salpêtrière-Nancy debates, often leading Freud to side with Charcot, even after he departed from the Master's model. As early as the "Report on My Studies in Paris and Berlin," Freud also underlines his fascination for the phenomena of hypnotism itself, which appears in conjunction, or in parallel to the fascination for its theorization by Charcot, and initially manifests itself as a form of bewildered astonishment:

> The phenomena of hypnotism … are *so astonishing* and to which so little credence is attached, and in particular with the 'grand hypnotisme' described by Charcot. I found *to my astonishment* that here were occurrences *plain before one's eyes,* which it was quite *impossible to doubt*, but which were nevertheless *strange enough* not to be believed unless they were experienced at first hand.[426]

The initial shock of the confrontation with the mysterious effects of hypnotism seem to exert a similar power over the pupil as did the master's portrayal of it.

After Freud's visit to Nancy in 1889, however, and as the gap between the two opposing conceptions of hypnosis grew more visible, Bernheim's attacks on the Salpêtrière doctrines can no longer be ignored. In this sense, despite his loyalty towards Charcot, throughout the pre-psychoanalytic years, one can almost sense Freud being pulled in two conflicting directions and detect, as James Strachey has pointed out, subtle "signs of oscillation in Freud's attitude to the debate."[427] How, then, does this oscillation take place?

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[425] Freud, "Five Lectures" (1910), in *SE,* 11: 21.
[426] Freud, "Report" (1886) in *SE,* 1:13, emphasis added.
[427] Strachey, "Editor's Introduction to Papers on Hypnotism and Suggestion," in *SE,* 1: 67.

The Nancy-Salpêtrière Debate

In his preface to the first edition of Bernheim's *De la suggestion*, which he claims to have translated without endorsing its content, Freud clearly lays out the stakes of the conflict between the two French schools, emphasizing the opposing conceptions of hypnosis as psychological on the one hand, and physiological on the other:

> One party, whose opinions are voiced by Dr. Bernheim in these pages, maintains that all the phenomena of hypnotism have the same origin: they arise, that is, from a suggestion, a conscious idea, which has been introduced into the brain of the hypnotized person by an external influence and has been accepted by him as though it had arisen spontaneously. On this view all hypnotic manifestations would be psychical phenomena, effects of suggestions. The other party, on the contrary, stand by the view that the mechanism of some at least of the manifestations of hypnotism is based upon physiological changes-that is, upon displacements of excitability in the nervous system, occurring without the participation of those parts of it which operate with consciousness; they speak, therefore, of the physical or physiological phenomena of hypnosis.[428]

As we saw with Delboeuf, the stakes are higher for the Salpêtrière school, as the entire Charcotian edifice lies on the idea that the phenomena in question have not been produced or suggested, but objectively observed. In his description of the debate, Freud is not afraid to stage this question in dramatic terms. If Bernheim is right, as he points out,

> *All observations* made at the Salpêtrière are *worthless*; indeed, they become errors in observation. The hypnosis of hysterical patients would have no characteristics of its own; but every physician would be free to produce any symptomatology that he liked in the patients he hypnotized. We should not learn from the study of major hypnotism what alterations in excitability succeed one another in the nervous system . . . we should merely *learn what intentions Charcot suggested* (in a manner of which he himself was unconscious) to the subjects of his experiments—a thing entirely irrelevant to our understanding alike of hypnosis and of hysteria.[429]

Examined in light of Freud's ulterior insistence on the "neutrality" of the analyst's posture, this question of the unconscious suggestions emitted by the operator already lays out the future stakes for analysis, in a gestated form. At the time of Freud's preface, though, the stakes concern less the question of the position of the physician in the therapeutic relation than the consequences which urgently emerge for the study of hysteria as an objective phenomenon. Indeed, what is at stake here is the risk of contaminating, of transferring the mimetic and thus "illusory" aspects of hypnosis as induced hysteria to the whole symptomatology of hysteria in general:

> If suggestion by the physician has falsified the phenomena of hysterical hypnosis, it is quite possible that it may also have interfered with the observation of the rest of hysterical symptomatology: it may have laid down laws governing hysterical attacks, paralyses, contractures, etc., which are only connected with the neurosis through suggestion and which consequently lose their validity as soon as another physician in another place makes an examination of hysterical patients.[430]

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[428] Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion,*" (1888-9) in *SE,*1: 76.
[429] Ibid., 78, emphasis added.
[430] Freud, Ibid., 78.

What one took to be "laws" would turn out to be artifacts, inadvertently produced—as Delboeuf pointed out—by the continuation of an initial suggestion of the experimenter. The effects of this original suggestion would have been reproduced time and time again in the experimental context, which would remain blind to the confusion between the phenomena it observes and those it produces. In this sense, as Isabelle Stengers shows, early on, hypnosis presented Freud with the ultimate threat to the scientific inquiry of the human psyche: "What experimenters dread—the artifact. If it is known that a fact is extorted, forced, purely dependent on its experimental conditions, it is worthless."[431] Even before the abandonment of the cathartic method and well before the abandonment of the seduction theory, hypnosis constitutes the field and the object which "lays a trap for those who think it produces a reliable witness, that it places its subject 'in the service of truth'."[432] Carrying at its heart the impossibility of reality checking, the danger of confusing art[ifact] and truth, hypnotic phenomena represent the danger at the heart of all experimental procedure.

Nevertheless, in 1888, Freud still sided with Charcot. Loyal to the Master, he reiterates the orthodox discourse of the Paris school: "the principal points of the symptomatology of hysteria are safe from the suspicion of having originated from suggestion by a physician."[433] Significantly, Freud uses Charcot's interest in artistic collection and invokes the multitude of examples of trance states from the *past,* in order to consolidate the legitimacy of the physiological conception of hysteria *in the present.* The historical ubiquity of trance states—or as Charcot would have it, of hysterical symptoms—is invoked as an aid to prove the universality and thus, objective existence, of the Salpêtrière's symptomatology: *"*Reports coming from past times and from distant lands, which have been collected by Charcot and his pupils, leave no room for doubt that the peculiarities of hysterical attacks, of hysterogenic zones, of anesthesia, paralyses and contractures, have been manifested at every time and place just as they were at the Salpêtrière."[434]

Despite these efforts, Freud already seems to be oscillating between his loyalty to the organic model and his interest in the psychical causes of hysteria. On the one hand, Freud insists that hysteria "is of a real, objective nature and not falsified by suggestion on the part of the observer," but on the other, cannot help but concede that "this does not imply any denial that the

[431] Stengers, 84.
[432] Ibid., 83.
[433] Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion*," 78.
[434] Freud, Ibid., 78-79.

mechanism of hysterical manifestations is a psychical one: but it is not the mechanism of suggestion on the part of the physician."[435] The balance seems rather precarious at this stage, before the appearance of the concept of repression. In 1888, Freud can commit fully to neither of the opposing poles presented to him, and instead, adopts a position of compromise, stating that "it would be just as one-sided to consider only the psychological side of the process as to attribute the whole responsibility for the phenomena of hypnosis to the vascular innervation."[436]

The Oscillation. Siding with Bernheim?

Nevertheless, in several occurrences Freud does seems to make a number of concessions to the Bernheimian model, despite his reticence. For instance, while he unwilling to grant any point which would harm Charcot's theory of *grande hystérie*, Freud does seem ready to side with Bernheim on the question of "minor" hypnosis (*petit hypnotisme*), that is, of the hypnotism of healthy individuals, which the Salpêtrière distinguished from the "major" hypnotism (*grand hypnotisme)* described in the previous sections.[437] Indeed, as Freud writes:

> In normal minor hypnotism … every manifestation ... comes about by means of suggestion, by psychical means. Even hypnotic sleep, it seems, is itself a result of suggestion: sleep sets in owing to normal human suggestibility, because Bernheim arouses an expectation of sleep."[438]

As we saw, the Nancy school—which made no such distinction—conceived of *all* hypnosis as a natural, rather than pathological, phenomenon. Because, as Freud shows, Charcot's notion of "minor" hypnosis introduces the "normal" and the psychological back into hypnosis, it implicitly undermined the Salpêtrière's doctrine and fragilizes the strict assimilation between hypnosis and the pathological. In this case, Freud seems to be pulled towards the naturalization of the phenomenon rather than its pathologization.

And indeed, after his visit to Nancy, Freud began to criticize Charcot's model more explicitly. In his article 1891 article, "Hypnosis," published in Anton Bum's medical dictionary, *Therapeutisches Lexikon,* he moves away from the strict Charcotian assimilation and seems to agree with Bernheim's rejection of the correlation between depth of trance and suggestibility:

> We should be wrong if we sought to restrict the making of suggestions to those other cases in which the patient becomes somnambulistic or falls into a deep degree of hypnosis. … The depth of a hypnosis is not

[435] Ibid., 79.
[436] Ibid., 84.
[437] As Binet and Féré describe it, minor hypnotism is "difficult to distinguish from natural sleep." Binet and Féré, *Le Magnétisme animal,* 75.
[438] Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion*," 80.

> invariably in direct proportion to its success. We may produce the greatest changes in the lightest hypnosis and, on the contrary, we may have a failure under somnambulism.[439]

In passages like these, one could indeed almost attribute the authorship to Bernheim himself. In the same article, Freud describes the use of direct suggestion for symptom removal—of which, as we saw, Liébeault also made ample use—as a valuable tool, and as the core essence of the use of hypnosis in the therapeutic context: "The true therapeutic value of hypnosis lies in the suggestions made during it. These suggestions consist in an energetic denial of the ailments of which the patient has complained, or in an assurance that he can do something, or in a command to perform it."[440]

The instability of the results obtained by suggestive therapeutics—an argument often invoked by the detractors of hypnosis, and by Freud himself later on—does not seem to be problematic in this article:

> If hypnosis has had success, the stability of the cure depends on the same factors as the stability of every cure achieved in another way. If what it was dealing with were residual phenomena of a process that was concluded, the cure will be a permanent one; if the causes which produced the symptoms are still at work with undiminished strength, then a relapse is probable. ... In a number of cases—namely where the symptoms are of purely psychical origin—hypnosis fulfils all the demands that can be made of a causal treatment, and in that case questioning and calming the patient in deep hypnosis is as a rule accompanied by the most brilliant success.[441]

In responses to arguments against the inconsistent, unreliable, or temporary effects of direct suggestion, Freud evokes the comparison with other available physiological treatments: "Whereas no patient ventures to be impatient if he has still not been cured after the twentieth electrical session or an equal number of bottles of mineral water, with hypnotic treatment both physician and patient grow tired far sooner, as a result of the contrast between the deliberately rosy coloring of the suggestions and the cheerless truth."[442] Despite the fact that it emphasizes the gap that can occur between the—"rosy"—objectives and the—"cheerless"—results of suggestive therapeutics, Freud's description also seems to participate in a *defense* of hypnosis, by replacing it among other competing remedies: the patience with which these latter treatments are met must also be granted to hypnosis.

Furthermore, in his article Freud, also uses arguments that the Nancy school would be expected to mobilize in order to *defend* itself from the position that we usually associate with

[439] Freud, "Hypnosis" (1891), in *SE,* 1:110; 112.
[440] Ibid., 111.
[441] Ibid., 113.
[442] Ibid., 113.

Freud's later critique of hypnotism. For example, pointing to the importance of non-verbal suggestions, Freud writes:

> A far more powerful result than that produced by a simple assurance or denial is achieved if we link the expected cure to an action or intervention [of our own] during hypnosis. For instance: 'You no longer have any pains at this place; I press on it and the pain has gone.' Stroking and pressing on the ailing part of the body during hypnosis gives excellent support in general to the spoken suggestion.[443]

This use of an indirect kinesthetic suggestion—although it recalls images of the old mesmeric passes or Liébeault's nostalgia for magnetic healing through touch—serves to *assist* the psychical integration of the content of verbal suggestion. In this way, it also stands out as the possible hypnotic origin of the "pressure technique" which Freud used later on to facilitate psychical movement in the opposite direction, as it were—that is, not for the integration of exterior information, but for the retrieval of repressed material.

Hypnosis as Fact

Like the nineteenth-century novelists examined in Chapter 2, despite the problems arising from the question of their cause, for a time, the *effects* of hypnosis seemed impossible to dismiss for Freud. This, as I will show, was for empirical—rather than theoretical—reasons.

In his review of Auguste Forel's *Hypnotism,* Freud notes the rare enthusiasm of the Swiss psychiatrist, who claims that *"*the discovery of the psychological importance of suggestion by Braid and Liébeault [is] so magnificent that it can be compared with the greatest discoveries, or rather revelations, of the human spirit."[444] Freud then immediately declares that anyone who might consider this remark "a gross overvaluation of hypnosis" should "postpone a final judgement till the next few years have made it clear how many of the great theoretical and practical revolutions which hypnosis promises to bring about can in fact result from it."[445] This type of argumentation values hypnotism as an empirical fact, with potentially "invaluable therapeutic effects."[446] From the promising nature of its "results"—of its effects, rather than its theoretical worth—stems the scientist's "duty not to abandon this powerful expedient henceforward."[447] This emphasis on the "fact" of hypnosis suggests a primacy of experience over theory. Indeed, as Freud describes him,

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[443] Ibid., 111.
[444] August Forel, *Hypnotism,* quoted in Freud, "Review of August Forel's *Hypnotism,*" in *SE,* 1:91.
[445] Freud, "Review of August Forel's *Hypnotism,*" (1889), in *SE,* 1:91.
[446] Ibid., 92.
[447] Ibid., note 2, 95.

Forel is "a serious physician who has come to know the value and importance of hypnosis from his own *rich experience* and has a right to exclaim to 'the scoffers and unbelievers': '*test before you judge*!' And we must agree with him when he adds: 'In order to make a judgement about hypnotism one must have *practiced it for a time oneself*.'[448]

Hinting at the medical community's own suggestibility toward authority figures and compelling discourse, Freud therefore urges physicians—especially the German opponents of hypnosis of the time, among which his old professor Theodor Meynert—to have "respect for the facts" rather than for the greatness of those who study them.[449] Invoking his own experience with his patients, he argues: "Any physician who is accessible to considerations of fact will be led to take a less unfavorable attitude when he notices that the supposed victims of hypnotic therapy suffer less after their treatment and can perform their duties better than they did before—as I can assert is the case with my own patients."[450]

In this way, if suggestive therapeutics are to be rehabilitated, it is first and foremost as an empirical, rather than theoretical, phenomenon. The question of the existence of hypnosis is no longer at stake: only that of its therapeutic value remains.

A Harmless Practice

In his 1889 review, Freud also responds to arguments about the "dangers" of hypnosis and describes it instead as a harmless state. In doing so, he is careful to distinguish between the hypnotic induction and direct suggestion: "Hypnotic treatment consists in the first place in bringing about a hypnotic state and in the second place in conveying a suggestion to the hypnotized subject."[451] This distinction then enables him to ask, "which of these two acts is supposed to be the injurious one? The bringing about of hypnosis?"[452] Following the Nancy school's doctrine, hypnosis is naturalized and compared to natural sleep: "hypnosis, when it is most completely successful, is nothing other than ordinary sleep which is so familiar to us all."[453] Furthermore, the analogies drawn between sleep and madness—"in sleep we lose our psychical equilibrium and that the activity of our brain during sleep is a disordered one and is in many ways reminiscent of

[448] Ibid., 92.
[449] Ibid., 93.
[450] Ibid.
[451] Ibid., 92.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Ibid.

insanity"—are not sufficient to undermine the harmlessness of hypnosis. In the preface to Bernheim's *De la Suggestion*, Freud even uses the description of dreams as an ordinary form of psychosis, to emphasize the harmlessness of hypnosis:

> There is little to be gained by calling ... hypnosis 'an experimental psychosis.'... Anyone who is scared by the abusive term 'psychosis' may well ask himself whether our natural sleep has any less claim to that description … No, the cause of hypnotism is in no danger from this quarter … hypnosis is a harmless condition and to induce it is a procedure 'worthy' of a physician.[454]

Furthermore, just as the analogy between sleep and madness "does not prevent our awakening from sleep with renewed strength mentally," the subject emerges from hypnosis unscathed, having benefited from its therapeutic effects. Therefore, as Freud concludes, "we need not feel afraid that the dangers of hypnotic therapy lie in the act of hypnotizing."[455] In this sense, not only is hypnosis a "serious" practice, worthy of the medical field, its harmless quality also paves the way for Freud to distance himself from the conceptions of dreams and sleep found in older psychiatric models and produce his descriptions of primary psychical processes and later on, of the dream work.

After having established the harmlessness of induction, in his review of Forel's book, Freud then goes on to wonder, "is suggestion the dangerous part?"[456] The—negative—response to this question is based on the ubiquity of suggestion, and its "partial" character, which preserves the freedom of the patient and the unity of the psyche:

> Is it, then, really possible to forget that the suppression of a patient's independence by hypnotic suggestion is always only a partial one, that it is aimed at the symptoms of an illness … and that life daily produces on every individual psychical effects which, even though they impinge on him while he is awake, make far more intense changes in him than does the suggestion of the physician who is trying to get rid of a painful or anxious idea by means of an effective counter-idea?"[457]

In this sense, Freud is able to conclude—in strikingly modern fashion—that "there is nothing dangerous in hypnotic therapy but its misuse.[458]

If any criticism can be addressed against hypnosis, it must therefore also apply to all therapy: "A whole number of the reproaches that have been leveled against hypnosis apply not in particular to it but to our therapy in general and may indeed be more justifiably directed against particular procedures which we all practice rather than against hypnosis."[459] Addressing opponents

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[454] Freud, "Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion*," 77. In this passage, Freud also argues that it is hypnosis that allows to shed light on the pathological phenomenon of monoideism, not the other way around.
[455] Freud, "Review of August Forel's *Hypnotism,*" 93.
[456] Ibid.,*"* 93.
[457] Ibid., 94.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid., 93.

to hypnosis, Freud invokes the moral duty of the physician, who must reduce suffering with the available means at hand : "As physicians, they will discover the impossibility of not practicing hypnosis and of allowing their patients to suffer when they can relieve them by a harmless use of psychical influence. They will be obliged to say to themselves that hypnosis loses none of its harmlessness and none of its curative value by being called 'artificial insanity' or 'artificial hysteria'."[460]

And indeed, following this advice himself, Freud experimented with hypnosis and suggestive therapeutics in his own practice. In 1892, he published "A Case of Successful Treatment by Hypnotism,"[461] a striking paper which describes his use of hypnotic suggestion in the case of "a mother" who finds herself unable to feed her new-born baby:[462]

> I made use of suggestion to contradict all her fears and the feelings on which those fears were based: 'Have no fear! You will make an excellent nurse and the baby will thrive. Your stomach is perfectly quiet, your appetite is excellent, you are looking forward to your next meal, etc.' The patient went on sleeping while I left her for a few minutes, and when I had woken her up showed amnesia. … When I returned on the third evening the patient refused to have any further treatment. There was nothing more wrong with her, she said: she had an excellent appetite and plenty of milk for the baby, there was not the slightest difficulty when it was put to her breast, and so on. Her husband thought it rather queer that after my departure the evening before she had clamoured violently for food and had remonstrated with her mother in a way quite unlike herself. But since then, he added, everything had gone all right. There was nothing more for me to do.[463]

Here, Freud clearly uses Liébeault and Bernheim's method of direct suggestion, focusing not merely on the physiological process of lactation, but also on the psychological and aspects linked to the symptom ("the feelings on which those fears were based"). Although partial, the success of hypnosis here is paradoxically linked to the absence of the need for it: once the symptom has been removed, it is dismissed. In the paper, Freud also mentions the patient's aversion to hypnosis and the "shame" associated to the helplessness of her conscious willpower in face of the "counter-will" that prevents her from fulfilling her motherly duties. In a subtle and roundabout way, by alleviating the affective distress produced by what would later on be called repressed material, hypnosis becomes an early proof of the existence of the psychic unconscious and a crucial steppingstone in the invention of the concepts of repression and resistance.

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[460] Ibid.

[461] Freud, "A Case of Successful Treatment by Hypnotism," (1892-93), in *SE,* 1:115-128. The concept of "counter-will" that figures in this paper seems to anticipate Freud's later notion of repression. In this way, resistance to hypnotic suggestion was a crucial element that lead to the elaboration of the concept of repression.

[462] Ibid., 117. Freud describes this patient as being an *hystérique d'occasion*, but not a neurotic. According to Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, it is highly probable that the mother in question was none other than Martha Bernays, Freud's own wife. See Borch-Jacobsen, *Sigmund Freud. L'Hypnose. Textes—1886/1893* (Paris: Éditions de l'Iconoclaste, 2015), 381 note 3.

[463] Freud, "A Case of Successful Treatment by Hypnotism," 120.

An Occasional Defense of Bernheim

As early as 1889, Freud moved away from Charcot's doctrines more clearly and sided with Bernheim, whom he visited briefly before the 1889 Congress on Hypnotism in Paris.[464] Indeed, as Freud argues:

> A physician who desires to study hypnosis and form an opinion on it will undoubtedly be best advised to adopt the suggestion theory from the first. For he will be able to convince himself of the correctness of the assertions of the school of Nancy at any time on his own patients, whereas he is scarcely likely to find himself in a position to confirm from his own observation the phenomena described by Charcot as 'major hypnotism', which seem only to occur in a few sufferers from *grande hystérie*.[465]

Whereas the *fact* of hypnosis seems to be on the side of the Nancy school, Charcot's *grand hypnotisme* is circumscribed to the confines of the laboratory setting as an artificial construct. By the time of his 1893 obituary of Charcot, Freud has then clearly distanced himself from the Master and at last, explicitly criticizes "the exclusively nosographical" approach of the Salpêtrière: "the restriction of the study of hypnosis to hysterical patients, the differentiation between major and minor hypnotism, the hypothesis of three stages of "major hypnosis," and their characterization by somatic phenomena—all this sank … when Bernheim set about constructing the theory of hypnotism on a more comprehensive psychological foundation and making suggestion the central point of hypnosis."[466]

Criticism of Bernheim

However, it would be reductive to try and pull Freud towards the Nancy side of the spectrum too strongly. On some aspects of the Bernheimian model, Freud remained intractably critical until the end. Especially, both in the review of Forel and thirty years later in his *Second Introductory Lecture*, he denounced the vagueness and tautological dimension that, according to him, characterizes Bernheim's concept of suggestion:

> But what in fact is this suggestion, which is the basis of the whole of hypnotism, in which all these results are possible? By raising this question, we touch one of the weak sides of the Nancy theory. We are

[464] For example, this concerns the question of induction, and the admittance that suggestion acts in *all* induction procedures, even in the Salpêtrière techniques of non-verbal—"indirect"—suggestion: the manner in which this condition is brought about (and ended) … appears to be possible in three ways: (1) by the psychical influence of one person on another (suggestion), (2) by the (physiological) influence of certain procedures (fixating), by magnets, the human hand, etc., and (3) by self-influence (auto-suggestion). Only the first of these methods is, however, established: production by ideas-suggestion. In none of the other ways of producing hypnosis does the possibility seem to be excluded of the action of suggestion in some form or other. Freud, "Review of August Forel's *Hypnotism*," 95.
[465] Ibid., 98.
[466] Freud, "Charcot," (1893), in *SE,* 3:22-3.

> involuntarily reminded of the question of where St. Christopher stood when we find that Bernheim's exhaustive work, which culminates in the statement 'Tout est dans la suggestion,' nowhere attempts to touch upon the nature of suggestion—that is, upon a definition of the concept.[467]

Much later on, by the time of the preface to the second edition of Bernheim's *De la suggestion* in 1896*,* Freud is categorical: "while [Bernheim] explains all the phenomena of hypnotism by suggestion, suggestion itself remains wholly unexplained."[468] As James Strachey has noted, at the end of the century, we see Freud definitely withdrawing from his earlier inclination to support Bernheim's views, explaining hypnosis with the concept of the "primitive" rather than with the notion of suggestion:

> The discussions in this section have induced us to give up Bernheim's conception of hypnosis and go back to the naïve earlier one. According to Bernheim all hypnotic phenomena are to be traced to the factor of suggestion, which is not itself capable of further explanation. We have come to the conclusion that suggestion is a partial manifestation of the state of hypnosis, and that hypnosis is solidly founded upon a predisposition which has survived in the unconscious from the early history of the human family.[469]

Therefore, if there was an oscillation, it was mitigated at most. Although after 1889, he used Bernheim's ideas to distance himself from the doctrines of the Salpêtrière, Freud never adhered to the Nancy School's theory of suggestion. Therefore, as he summarizes it in a February 20, 1930 letter to A. A. Roback, 'In the question of hypnosis I did take sides against Charcot, though not wholly with Bernheim.'[470]

1.2.1.3. A Clean Break? The Birth of Psychoanalysis

Finally, as the birth of psychoanalysis grew closer, Freud expressed increased frustration with the hypnotic technique. Operating *por via di levare* himself*,*[471] he gradually stripped the hypnotic trance of its somnambulistic depth—which he struggled to induce—and moved towards a lighter form of trance, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of his technique of free

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[467] Freud, "Review," *SE,* 1:101.

[468] Freud, "Preface to the second German translation of Bernheim's *Suggestion,*" (1896), in *SE,* 1:87. In Chapter IV of *Group Psychology* Freud also argues that suggestion cannot explain itself, as it is only a "magic word" which tautologically explains the "magical power of words." In *SE,* 18:88; 80.

[469] Freud, footnote 128n. quoted in in "Editor's preface," 68.

[470] Freud, quoted in "Editor's Preface," *SE,* 1:68.

[471] In "On Psychotherapy," drawing on the imagery of fine arts of Leonardo da Vinci, Freud famously contends that like painting, suggestion acts *per via di porre* ("it superimposes something… in the expectation that it will be strong enough to prevent the pathogenic idea from coming to expression") whereas analytic technique acts *per via di levare:* it introduces nothing new, but on the contrary, brings out, removes, lifts away the pathogenic idea by "concerning itself with the genesis of symptoms." Freud, "On Psychotherapy," (1905), *SE,* 7:259, note 16. As we shall see further down, this distinction is only valid when one reduces hypnotherapy to mere symptom removal with direct suggestion, however. Like analysis, modern hypnotherapy can also be considered as operating *per via di levare.*

association. In a sense, this "shifting away," parallels the previous movement away from Bernheim's direct suggestive technique, and moves toward the cathartic method, both of which constitute central steppingstones leading up to the birth of the analytic technique. It is with a double movement, then, that "psychoanalysis is born by tearing itself from the maternal womb of hypnosis"—an itinerary rather than a clean break.[472]

From Direct Suggestion to the Cathartic Method

In his *Autobiographical Study*, Freud claims that "*from the very first* I made use of hypnosis in another manner, apart from hypnotic suggestion,"[473] a statement that seems to refer to the fact that in May 1889, Freud began treating Emmy von N. using the cathartic method. Developed by Joseph Breuer, the cathartic method was founded on the abreaction of repressed affect linked to traumatic memories, and still used hypnosis, albeit not for direct suggestion. Rather, it serves to reimmerse the subject into what Breuer calls the "hypnoid" state, during which the traumatic event became embedded in the psyche like a "foreign body," in order to produce the recollection of the event and the salutary abreaction. As is widely known, in the cathartic treatment, the symptom disappears with the recollection of the traumatic scene and its "purgative" narration. The cathartic method

> brings to an end the operative force of the idea which was not abreacted in the first instance, by allowing its strangulated affect to find a way out through speech; and it subjects it to associative correction by introducing it into normal consciousness (under light hypnosis) or by removing it through the physician's suggestion, as is done in somnambulism accompanied by amnesia.[474]

With the appearance of the cathartic method, the extension of the term hypnosis is widened once more. Instead of being reduced to a single use, such as mere symptom removal induced by direct suggestion or posthypnotic amnesia, it is now used in the service of a deeper procedure, to access unconscious material. In Freud and Breuer's 1893 Preliminary Communication on "The Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," hypnosis is the necessary gateway that provides access to traumatic memories and allows for the recollection of the cause of the symptom, "in part because what is in question is often some experience which the patient dislikes discussing; but principally because he is genuinely unable to recollect it and often has no suspicion of the causal connection

[472] Borch-Jacobsen, *Hypnoses,* 59, our translation.
[473] Freud, "An Autobiographical Study," (1925), in SE, 20:19, emphasis added.
[474] S. Freud and J. Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," (1893), in *SE,* 2:17.

between the precipitating event and the pathological phenomenon."[475] Here, hypnosis is not suspected as a potential creator of false memories. On the contrary, the vocabulary is one of clarity and transparency: "*it is necessary* to hypnotize the patient and to arouse his memories under hypnosis … when this has been done, it becomes possible to demonstrate the connection i*n the clearest and most convincing fashion*"; "not until they have been questioned under hypnosis do these memories emerge with *the undiminished vividness*."[476]

It is well known that in the cathartic method, which relies on the power of abreaction and of unleashed affect in the reliving of the traumatic event, "The psychical process which originally took place must be repeated as vividly as possible; it must be brought back to its *statu nascendi* and then given verbal utterance."[477] The therapeutic value of the cathartic method is then affirmed against the weaknesses of the Bernheimian model : "any residues which may be left in the form of chronic symptoms or attacks are often removed, and permanently so, by our method, because it is a radical one; in this respect it seems to us far superior in its efficacy to removal through direct suggestion, as it is practiced to-day by psychotherapists."[478]

The Abandonment of Hypnosis

Freud's difficulties with hypnosis were expressed in the criticism of its unpredictable, unreliable efficacy:

> With one person there is scarcely a symptom that does not yield to suggestion, however firm its organic basis … with another person it is impossible to influence even disorders with an undoubted psychical causation. Not less depends on the dexterity of the hypnotist and the conditions under which he is able to treat his patients. I myself have had not a few happy results from hypnotic treatment; but I do not venture to undertake some cures of a sort which I have witnessed under Liébeault and Bernheim at Nancy. I know too that a good part of this success is due to the 'suggestive atmosphere' which surrounds the clinic of these two physicians, to the milieu and to the mood of the patients—things which I cannot always replace for the subjects of my experiments.[479]

Here Freud seems to place the problematic dimension on the side of hypnosis itself, not of the therapist.[480] As James Strachey has noted, Freud's "irritation" with hypnotic technique began as

[475] Ibid.,3.
[476] Ibid., 3; 9, emphasis added.
[477] Ibid., 6.
[478] Ibid., 17.
[479] Freud, "Review," 100.
[480] Significantly, the criticism addressed in the second half of the quoted passage, which points out the increase in efficacy that can be attributed to the implicit suggestions contained in the patient's environment—the "suggestive atmosphere" of the Nancy clinics—rather than lead to a condemnation of hypnosis as devoid of efficacy, tends on the contrary to reinforce its potential power, via that of indirect suggestion.

early as 1891.[481] Later, in 1910, he sums up his position by invoking not the unreliability of the therapeutic efficacy of direct suggestion, but the difficulty in inducing consistently deep hypnotic states "But I soon came to dislike hypnosis, for it was a temperamental and, one might almost say, a mystical ally. When I found that, in spite of all my efforts, I could not succeed in bringing more than a fraction of my patients into a hypnotic state, I determined to give up hypnosis and to make the cathartic procedure independent of it."[482] This "giving up of hypnosis," however, merely concerns the abandonment of formal induction, and guarantees neither the elimination of trance nor that of suggestion from the analytic context.[483] Indeed, as we can see in the passage following this initial announcement, Freud's method transposes Bernheim's technique of "lifting" post-hypnotic amnesia—which consisted in using suggestion to "assure" the subject they will be able to remember—to the cathartic method:

> So I did the same thing with my patients. When I reached a point with them at which they maintained that they knew nothing more, *I assured* them that they did know it all the same, and that they had only to say it; and I *ventured to declare* that the right memory would occur to them at the moment at which I laid my *hand on their forehead.* In that way I succeeded, *without using hypnosis*, in obtaining from the patients whatever was required for establishing the connection between the pathogenic scenes they had forgotten and the symptoms.[484]

Although there is no longer a formal induction of trance, the use of verbal ("I assured"; "I ventured to declare") and non-verbal (the pressure technique) suggestions is still clearly in use. In this way, hypnosis can only be considered as having been discarded or "done without" if one reduces it to its narrow sense.

Freud's main argument against hypnosis is summarized in the Second *Introductory Lecture.* According to Freud, the main problem stemming from hypnosis is that its suggestive nature provides unreliable material which masks the patient's resistance, by giving the impression of its dissolution. In fact, it prevents actual working-through by creating stronger resistance to analytic insight. Indeed, as Freud argues, the findings of Breuer's case histories "were reached with the help of hypnotic influence. It is only if you exclude hypnosis that you can observe resistances and repressions and form an adequate idea of the truly pathogenic course of events. Hypnosis conceals the resistance and renders a certain area of the mind accessible; but, as against

[481] More specifically, it appears in 1891 in his contribution to Bum's medical dictionary, in 1892 in a footnote to his translation of Charcot's *Leçons du Mardi*, and in 1895 in the case history of Miss Lucy R. in the *Studies on Hysteria*. See Strachey, "Editor's Preface," in *SE,* 1:63-69.
[482] Freud, "Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis," (1910), in *SE,* 11:22.
[483] See Appendix A.
[484] Freud, "Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis," 23, emphasis added.

this, it builds up the resistance at the frontiers of this area into a wall that makes everything beyond it inaccessible."[485] Analytic inquiry, on the other hand, must examine resistance rather than artificially conceal it.

The End of Suggestion?

After 1893-1895, the practice of hypnosis was thus gradually "abandoned" and the analytic setting progressively rid of all suggestive influence. As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen notes, in the narration of the birth of psychoanalysis, this break is framed as "a shift towards a purely narrative, demimeticized, deemotionalized therapeutic method."[486] This shift involved several small adjustments, with which Freud rid the analytic setting of the various reminders of all suggestive influence. First, the state of "concentration" was substituted for hypnotic trance. Then, hypnotic induction was replaced by the pressure technique, which as we argues higher up, seems directly inspired from the hypnotic model.[487] The "mild word of command" which accompanies it—and which Freud does not name 'suggestion'—aims to help patients remember the "rejected" pathogenic material, or persuade them that they "already know everything that was of any pathogenic significance," that it was only a question of "obliging" them to "communicate" it.[488] In both cases, the content would be allowed to come forth, because the "critical faculties" were now "relaxed."[489] When a patient claims to still be unable to remember, Freud imitates the Bernheimian model and simply repeats the suggestion until the patient's belief has changed. Interestingly, although in practice this type of suggestion should have just as unreliable effects as the direct suggestions of Bernheim—which, as we may recall, can also prove efficacious without a somnambulism and therefore contain no technical difference with what Freud is doing here—Freud emphasizes the regularity and systematic dimension of his "success" with this—hypnotic—technique: "it yielded me the precise results that I needed"; "I can safely say that it has scarcely ever left me in the lurch"; "I turned out to be invariably right."[490] After Freud abandoned the pressure technique, he then purged free association of as much suggestive force as possible, merely

[485] Ibid., 26.
[486] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 47.
[487] In the case study of Lucy R., Freud describes the use of the pressure technique as intended to "indicate a different state of consciousness" to the patient. Freud, In "Studies on Hysteria," in *SE,* 109.
[488] Freud, "Studies on Hysteria," (1893), *SE,* 2:109.
[489] Ibid., 109-110.
[490] Ibid., 110.

requesting that the patient give free reign to their associations with their eyes closed.[491] In 1904, Freud recommends that the eyes remain open, and all physical contact be avoided, "as well as any other procedure which might be reminiscent of hypnosis."[492] Only one element remains—which one could argue is suggestive nonetheless—of the old hypnotic technique. In "On Beginning the Treatment," Freud mentions the analytic couch as a ceremonial element reminiscent of analysis' hypnotic parent:

> I must say a word about a certain ceremonial which concerns the position in which the treatment is carried out. I hold to the plan of getting the patient to lie on a sofa while I sit behind him out of his sight. This arrangement has a historical basis; it is the remnant of the hypnotic method out of which psycho-analysis was evolved.[493]

James Strachey has noted the gratitude expressed by Freud in 1914: "We must still be grateful to the old hypnotic technique for having brought before us single psychical processes of analysis in an isolated or schematic form. Only this could have given us the courage ourselves to create more complicated situations in the analytic treatment and to keep them clear before us."[494] With this "gratitude," then, the narrative of the clean break with the historical hypno-suggestive ancestor can be finalized. As Freud writes in his "Recommendations":

> In practice … there is nothing to be said against a psychotherapist combining a certain amount of analysis with some suggestive influence in order to achieve a perceptible result in a shorter time. But one has a right to insist that he himself should be in no doubt about what he is doing and should know that this method is *not that of true psychoanalysis*.[495]

Therefore, after the initial fascination for the hypnotic fact and its therapeutic potential, psychoanalysis "proper" founded its identity on this very break. By attempting to distinguish itself from the suggestive in all of its manifestations, it proposed a self-definition which, as Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen argues, asserts itself "in its supposedly total difference from all psychotherapy and indeed from all thaumaturgy."[496]

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[491] In the beginning of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud still recommends keeping the eyes closed: "In order that he may be able to concentrate his attention on his self-observation it is an advantage for him to lie in a restful attitude and shut his eyes." Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," (1900), in *SE,* 4:101.

[492] "The physician "does not even ask them to close their eyes, and avoids touching them in any way." Strachey, "Freud's Psycho-Analytic Procedure (1904 [1903])" in *SE,* 7: 250.

[493] Freud, "On Beginning the Treatment (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis I)," (1913), in *SE,* 12:133.

[494] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," (1914) in *SE,* 12: 148.

[495] "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis," 1912, 118. Disregarding the latter part of the quote and focusing on the former, the hypnoanalysts of the twentieth century attempted to reconcile the analytic framework and the technical tool of hypnosis. See Appendix A.

[496] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject,* 39.

1.2.2. Back From the Dead: Hypnotic Hauntology

What, then, is to be made of the "death" of hypnosis after it birthed the analytic unconscious? Can traces of it not still be found, albeit unnamed, at the heart of the therapeutic relation, and indeed, of human interaction in general? Can one not argue, with Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, that psychoanalysis broke with hypnosis "only to see hypnosis reappear, sometimes under other names or in other forms, at the crossroads of all questions"?[497]

To respond to these questions, the term "hypnosis" must be reextended from the narrow sense, that reduces it to techniques of direct suggestion and formal inductions, to a broader sense, which gestures toward the subject's general suggestibility, and to the more archaic, affective-mimetic-suggestive "ties" that link individuals to one another.[498] If hypnosis survived the Freudian death blow, it was indeed by shape-shifting, by reappearing in various forms and various suggestive phenomena, without having to be named as such.[499] In this context, in what follows, I will examine three potential ways in which hypnosis can be said to "haunt" the analytic setting, even after its "death": as a second royal road to the unconscious, as an indissoluble "affective tie" at the heart of human interactions, and as the inevitable suggestive influence of the therapist on the patient.

1.2.2.1. A Second Road to the Unconscious

As Erika Fromm observes in *Hypnosis and Hypnoanalysis,* hypnotic trance produces "changes in thinking from reality-oriented, sequential, logical thinking (secondary process thinking, which employs mainly the mode of inner language) to preverbal, pictorial, fantasy-full thinking in imagery."[500] Once hypnosis is redefined, as Fromm does, as a state which facilitates the production of primary process thinking and fantasy material, there is no need to conceptually

[497] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie,* 44.
[498] For Borch-Jacobsen, "we should be asking what is encompassed by the terms *hypnosis* and *suggestion* if we want to know *from what*, exactly, psychoanalysis has freed itself—if it has really done so." Borch-Jacobsen, Ibid., 40.
[499] As stated in the introduction, in the extended sense, hypnosis can designate the wide array of suggestive phenomena that influence individuals and their modes of relating to one another, and can thus be thought to permeate all areas of human activity. In a less extended sense, it refers to a psychological state of suggestibility and absorption in which imaginary and unconscious, repressed or fantasized, material can emerge, and in the therapeutic context, can be worked-through. Finally, it can refer to the mimetic-affective tie between individuals that becomes magnified in the therapeutic relation.
[500] Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis,* 14.

oppose it to the analytic investigation. As a space in which the subject can live fantasy *in that it differs from reality*, hypnosis offers the opportunity to go beyond mere affective abreaction and explore the significance of the material which it elicits. As a form of absorption in an imaginative and subjectively significant content where the critical faculties of the psyche are "relaxed," like dreams, it can become a royal road to the unconscious. Indeed, as Rebecca Curtis argues, insofar as psychoanalysis is conducted "in the interstices between actual events and the meanings people make of them," in the "playground of the mind" between reality and fantasy, there is no reason to argue that "the suggestion to imagine events and feelings is inconsistent with psychoanalytic principles."[501]

In the *Introductory Lectures*, Freud even invokes hypnosis alongside dreams to prove the existence of the unconscious."[502] In *The Ego and the Id,* hypnosis becomes the paradigm of the unconscious, "a second royal road of analysis."[503] As Freud writes: "To most people who have been educated in philosophy the idea of anything psychical which is not also conscious is inconceivable… I believe this is only because they have never studied the relevant phenomena *of hypnosis and dreams*."[504]

Furthermore, once hypnosis is stripped of the hopes it still carried at the time of the cathartic method—that is, of providing access to the *actual* pathogenic cause or traumatic event—and once the problem of false memories has been evacuated by a focus on narrative, rather than historical, truth, its status as a second "royal road" becomes much stronger.[505] As a "slumbering of consciousness" during which the subject paradoxically remains awake, the hypnotic state is valuable, including in the analytic setting, as "particularly revealing of an unconscious psychic activity not subject to the monitoring and control of the ego."[506] And indeed, despite Freud's insistence on its neutrality, a series of suggestive or hypnotic elements seems to have survived in the analytic setting itself.[507] Among these, free association, although it is intended to prevent patients from being led astray by suggestions and expectations, also has a hypnotic rhythm, which

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[501] Curtis, "A New World Symphony," 259; 263.
[502] "Even before the time of psychoanalysis, hypnotic experiments, and especially posthypnotic suggestion, had tangibly demonstrated the existence and mode of operation of the mental unconscious." Freud, "The Unconscious," (1915), in *SE*, 14: 168.
[503] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie,* 41.
[504] Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *SE,* 19:13, emphasis added.
[505] For a more detailed explanation of the narrative turn in psychotherapy, see Appendix.
[506] Borch-Jacobsen, Ibid., 40.
[507] Indeed, the free-floating state of consciousness, lying on the couch, the relaxing of the critical faculties, the state of concentration, dream analysis and free association are all techniques which have an inductive dimension.

as the Surrealists knew, allows unconscious material to come to the foreground while rational, logical, critical or self-reflexive thinking temporarily recede. As Ferenczi himself has noted, "in all free-association there is necessarily an element of self-forgetful abstraction. ... When the patient is called upon to go further and deeper ... a more profound abstraction develops. Where this takes a quasi-hallucinatory form, people can call it auto-hypnosis if they like; my patients often call it a trance state."[508] Therefore, a first manifestation of the hypnotic in the analytic setting can be found in the effects of absorptive or trance-inducing elements, which played a central role in Ferenczi's work.[509]

1.2.2.2. The Emotional Tie: Hypnotic Rapport at the Heart of Psychoanalysis?

Another possible way to frame the "survival" of hypnosis in the analytic setting concerns not the inductive aspects of hypnotic-therapeutic technique, but the question of the suggestive, relational and affective aspects of the therapeutic relation itself. As Oscar Mannoni writes: "Freud knew that the transference, in analysis, is a remnant of hypnosis. … These infantile affects which precede speech are perhaps—or still—hypnotic traits."[510] Rather than explain hypnosis with the concept of transference, can one consider that hypnotic rapport lies at the foundation of the therapeutic relation? Does the hypnotic ancestor live on, even at the heart of psychoanalysis?

In *The Emotional Tie*, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen conducts a provocative analysis of Freud's theory of the social bond in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* arguing that hypnotic rapport, which can be found at the heart of all human interaction, becomes the "great riddle of psychoanalysis" as it reveals an irreducible affective tie at the foundation of both social and therapeutic relations.[511]

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[508] "Child-Analysis in the Analysis of Adults." *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 12 (1931): 475. Chertock and Stengers have also pointed to this compatibility between the hypnagogic dimension of analytic technique and trance states revealed in Ferenczi's work. Indeed, although he did not deliberately engage in suggestion and hypnosis, he nevertheless "left things in free play … and used the analytic instrument par excellence, free association. Even Freud had recognized on occasion … that the analytic setting could be hypnogenic … but Ferenczi puts to good use the uncontrollable ingredients that ought by rights to be excluded from the analytic setting. By so doing, Ferenczi actively erases the rigid frontier Freud had so often traced between hypnotic suggestion and psychoanalytic practice. … Interpretation, for him, is no longer independent of the affective relation created, in the form of a "trance" between the analyst and the patient." Chertock and Stengers, 95.

[509] See Appendix.

[510] Quoted in *Hypnoses,* 58.

[511] Freud himself speaks of "the riddle of suggestion" and "the riddle of suggestive influence," which for Borch-Jacobsen is that of our fundamental relation Freud, *Group psychology*, 89; 117; Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie* 41.

As Borch-Jacobsen describes it, this hypnotic-suggestive dimension is most visible in the transference itself, which repeats, actualizes and exposes repressed, historical, affect (which the subject paradoxically acts out but refuses to remember) in the present, *in statu nascendi,* as was the case with the hypnotic-mimetic acting out of hysteric patients at the time of the cathartic method.[512] In the transference, this relation is a "hypnotic umbilical cord" that keeps the subject tied to the "repetition, in history of prehistory."[513]

For Borch-Jacobsen, as transference gradually came to dominate the whole analytic encounter, it even ended up becoming another name for the "suggestibility" that Freud initially rejected, to the point where it can become difficult to distinguish analytic neutrality from suggestive forms of therapeutics.[514] In the positive transference for instance, the analysand inevitably develops a relation of suggestibility, "dependency, submission, or … excessive valorization of the person of the physician," thereby revealing the resurgence of *rapport* in the analytic setting.[515] Although for Freud, the interpretation and dissolution of the transference is what distinguishes analysis from its hypnotic ancestor, Borch-Jacobsen argues that the affective nature of transference renders it indissoluble and, *in fine,* un-rememberable and un-representable: rather than a representation stored in memory, as an affective process, it can merely be exhibited or repeated in the present mode and relived *in statu nascendi,* as in hypnosis.[516] The hypnotic dimension of transference thus lies in its affective—rather than representational—nature and in the suggestive component of the analytic relation. Reconceptualized as this irreducible affective core, hypnosis thus reappears in the analytic setting "with the crucial question now being to know how the transference relationship can finally be distinguished from the hypnotic tie, which analysis initially refused to mobilize in the cure."[517] The "emotional tie" underlying the analytic relation thus reveals Freud's difficulty in properly "cutting the cord" with the hypnotic-suggestive

[512] As Borch-Jacobsen argues: transference is at heart a resurgence of affect, and not a representation. Because for Freud affect can only be perceived in the present, it can therefore not, strictly speaking, be remembered or narrated, and thus (as in hypnosis) necessarily emerges in the mode of the dramatic-mimetic, rather than the diegetic.
[513] Borch-Jacobsen, *Hypnoses,* 58.
[514] As Borch-Jacobsen notes: if even the analyst's silence *triggers* transference reactions in the patient, then it is no longer possible to distinguish analytic neutrality from other suggestive-psychotherapeutic techniques. Borch-Jacobsen, *Le Lien Affectif,* 86.
[515] Borch-Jacobsen, Ibid., 85. Borch-Jacobsen even asks" "How can one know …. if the results of analytic cure weren't due to the hypnotic-transferential rapport, rather than to the interpretation and becoming-conscious of the repressed?" Ibid., 89.
[516] Ibid., 92.
[517] Ibid., 44

paradigm. For Borch-Jacobsen, with *rapport* at the heart of transference, the enigma of hypnosis thus "reappear[s] *in* psychoanalysis as the enigma of its own foundation."[518]

Borch-Jacobsen also underlines the presence of the affective tie outside of the therapeutic relation and of a suggestive component at the very foundations of the social bond, which challenges the theory of the social tie as a libidinal relation between the masses and the leader-Father. Although in *Group psychology,* Freud rejected the concept of suggestion as an explanation of the foundations of the social tie,[519] for Borch-Jacobsen, the "mystery" and "fact" of suggestion nevertheless remained, and constantly eluded Freud's attempts to theorize social relations in terms of an erotic, libidinous or love relation.[520]

Indeed, as Borch-Jacobsen shows in his reading of *Totem and Taboo* and the myth of the primal horde, as it is intimately linked to an original, archaic, "prehistoric" process of identification, the affective tie is *preexistent* to object-relations—libidinal, Oedipal or otherwise—and to the very constitution of "subject" and "object."[521] A preexisting and "original *alteration* (or affection) by others" exists "well before the constitution of an ego and well before any Oedipal triangle" and thus, well before the subject and its ulterior libidinous relation to an object-Father.[522]

According to him, admitting this original alteration, Freud is thus led to rediscover the emotional tie to others "as a pure enigma,"—the libidinal hypothesis having failed—and then paradoxically ends up making *hypnosis*—which, "much more than love, most clearly shows the unfathomable 'nature' or 'essence' of the *Gefühlsbindung* to others"—the paradigm of the social tie."[523] Indeed, in Chapter VIII, Freud writes that "it would be more to the point to explain being in love by means of hypnosis rather than the other way round."[524] In this context, by taking

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[518] Ibid.

[519] In *Group Psychology* Freud refuses theories of suggestion sur as those of Bernheim, Tarde and Le Bon. As we will see in Chapter 2, these theories of crowd psychology ultimately explain the foundation of the social tie by processes of unconscious and corporeal mimesis, and affective contagion. In Chapter IV of *Group Psychology,* Freud argues that the concept of suggestion is tautological and insufficient to explain the foundation of the social bond, and proposes instead his own theory of the libidinous relation between the crowd and the Leader-Father-Hypnotist. According to Borch-Jacobsen however, "rejecting the theory of suggestion never eliminated the enigma of hypnotic suggestion for Freud." Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 43.

[520] Freud's theory of the libido in *Group Psychology* remains "insufficient to explain the phenomenon" of the social tie, a "failure" which Freud "half admits." Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie,* 42-43

[521] Borch-Jacobsen, *Le Lien Affectif,* 58. For a description of this original ambivalent identification which contains aggression and precedes all relations of "love," see Borch-Jacobsen's reading of the constitution of the primal horde in "La Bande Primitive" in *Le Lien Affectif,* 13-32.

[522] Ibid., 42.

[523] Ibid.

[524] Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 114. In fact, Freud claims that "hypnosis would solve the riddle of the libidinal constitution of groups right away, if it were not that it itself exhibits some features which are not

hypnosis as a paradigm of our relationship to others, psychoanalysis thus "stumbled into the enigma of relationship itself, beyond the presupposed subject … of the relationship."[525]

Despite its provocative appeal about the close ties between analytic transference and hypnotic suggestibility, Borch-Jacobsen's argument nevertheless relies on a strongly mimetic conception of hypnosis, as a primitive, affective-suggestive relation that precedes subject formation and object relations. As we will show in Chapter 3, this type of description tends to overshadow the anti-mimetic distance that also exists in hypnotic experiences, which is ultimately still the experience of a subject. In response to Borch-Jacobsen's account of the hypnotic dimension that haunts psychoanalysis "proper," one might thus also add that conversely, "hypnosis proper" should be distinguished from the states of blind symbiosis and dissolution to which it is often reduced. In fact, it should be examined as the experience of an already constituted psyche, with the underlying presence of a subject-as-subject.[526]

1.2.2.3. The Ubiquity of Suggestion

According to Freud, the analyst must act like a mirror, turning his unconscious like a receptive organ toward the transmitting unconscious of the patient, adjusting to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone.[527] In this context, as François Roustang points out, "to admit that the analyst can have an influence on the patient or that he can will or wish something for him or in his place" would "ruin the entire psychoanalytic discovery, since one would be led back to a variant of suggestion."[528] This is the third way in which hypnosis can be considered to reemerge at the heart of analysis.

In "On beginning the treatment," when he states the reasons for maintaining the ritual of the couch as a "remnant" of hypnosis, Freud begins by mentioning a "personal motive"—his

met by the rational explanation we have hitherto given it, as a state of being in love with the directly sexual trends excluded. There is still a great deal in it which we must recognize as unexplained and mysterious." (Borch-Jacobsen uses "mystical" to translate the German *mystich*). Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 114-115.

[525] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 43.

[526] In Chapter 3, I undertake such an attempt, by examining hypnosis in light of the aesthetic experience of immersive reading.

[527] Freud, "Recommendations," in *SE,* 12:118. The analyst must also undergo analysis himself so as to not "tolerate any resistances in himself which hold back from his consciousness what has been perceived by his unconscious." Ibid., 116.

[528] François Roustang, *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go,* trans. Ned Lukacher (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1983, 55.

reluctance to have patients "starting" at him for "eight hours" a day.[529] The "proper" purpose of the procedure, however, is "to prevent the transference from mingling with the patient's associations imperceptibly, to isolate the transference and to allow it to come forward in due course sharply defined as a resistance."[530] In between these statements, however, Freud acknowledges the potential effects of the analyst's reactions on the patient: "while I am listening to the patient, I, too, give myself over to the current of my unconscious thoughts, I do not wish my expressions of face to give the patient material for interpretations or to influence him in what he tells me."[531] This question of the ideal of neutrality of the analyst, and that of its corollary, the counter-transference, inevitably bring back the question of hypnosis, this time not as a non-verbal affective tie at the heart of all relations, but as the inevitable suggestive influence that organizes the therapeutic encounter.

In a chapter titled "Suggestion Over the Long Term" in *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go*, Roustang rejects the very possibility of a neutral position, given the "intense" relation that underlies "every therapeutic enterprise, whether or not one wishes it."[532] According to Roustang, analytic neutrality is an ideal of the function, rather than an empirical possibility. In fact, the very ideal of neutrality can be considered as a form of magical thinking: "To confuse the function with the posture, that is to believe, as Freud does, that this attitude of pure receptivity, of having analyzed every resistance, is possible—is this not to reenter the realm of magic?"[533]

Indeed, in the analytic setting, not only is "the patient confronted with the analyst's own fantasies, symptoms and desires,"[534] which Freud already knew, but "everything in the analyst's unconscious passes to the patient under the protection of the mediated transference."[535] As Roustang provocatively writes, "anyone who has been to several different analysts knows very well that the past that he discovers with each one is different, and that his glance or his poor vision, his discourse or his bad hearing, have had a different effect on each of his analysands."[536] In this

[529] Freud, "On Beginning the Treatment (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis I)" (1913), in *SE,* 12:133.
[530] Ibid., 134.
[531] Ibid., 133.
[532] Roustang, *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go*, 93.
[533] Ibid., 78. As Roustang adds, "Is it not simply to adopt a perverse position of all-powerfulness which fixes the patient in his own corresponding state of infantile all-powerfulness?" Ibid.
[534] Ibid.
[535] Ibid., 61.
[536] Ibid.

sense, Roustang agrees with Ferenczi who notes that "in analysis it is not legitimate to suggest or hypnotize things into the patients, but it is not only right but advisable to suggest them out."[537]

Despite all possible precautions, as a body with its specific reactions and as a second unconscious present in the therapeutic space, the analyst himself cannot help but act like an embodied suggestion.[538] Even the analyst's silence can be considered as a form of suggestion:

> There is such an abyss between the silence of death and that of life, such a difference between the silence of inattention and that of alert interest, between the silence of desire and of impotence, between that of depression and that of continuous mania! Every silence has an intensity and a coloration that is perceptible to the patient. If punctuation gives meaning to a sentence, then surely silence alone, with all its nuances, is capable of passing to the patient all sorts of preconscious or unconscious messages, which are all the more clear because the analyst thinks he is protected from communicating them.[539]

Similarly, "routine questions such as, 'What keeps you from doing such and such?' implicitly contain suggestions."[540] Whatever the analyst's reaction, whether verbal or nonverbal, conscious or unconscious, it will manifest itself. In this sense, as Rebecca Curtis points out, "the patient's view of the analyst's behavior—whether that be silence, interpretation, or an active technique—must be explored and analyzed. Silence and interpretations are behaviors as much as is the direct proposal of a means of coping."[541] One might even go as far as claiming, like Roustang, that neutrality itself is a suggestion:

> If the analyst's position of pure receptivity suggests in effect, nothing in particular, would it not still constitute a *formidable suggestion*, since it arouses what is most fundamental to the patient, since it makes him depart from the real and from the present in order to send him into excess, immoderation, and unreality?[542]

By describing psychoanalysis as "one long drawn out suggestion," Roustang therefore implies that Freud has to face the same question than Mesmer in 1784 and Charcot in 1893 ("The numerous important psychological discoveries of psychoanalysis … are they not the result of unintentional suggestion?").[543] In doing so, he therefore repositions psychoanalysis in the continuity of suggestive therapeutic practices already drawn out by Ellenberger: "psychoanalysis follows the most ancient therapeutic tradition by making the personality of the analyst into the physician who can heal; [it] creates the condition of credulous expectation or responds to the anticipatory ideas

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[537] Ferenczi, "Child-Analysis," 475.
[538] In this sense, the creation of a transference neurosis and the working towards its dissolution in no way prevents the analysand from being receptive, in return, to the suggestive elements—including the analyst's own resistance—presented to him, even under the cover of interpretation.
[539] Roustang, *Psychoanalysis Never Lets Go*, 59.
[540] Curtis, "A New World Symphony," 256.
[541] Ibid., 252.
[542] Roustang, 78, emphasis added.
[543] Freud, note 74 in Roustang, 90.

as healers had done in the times past."[544] In this sense, "suggestive" therapeutics have been extended to all therapeutics.

1.2.3. Hypnosis, After Analysis?

Although the Freudian model seemed to overshadow or even mark the end of hypnosis, as we have shown, its "core" manifestations reemerged even in the field which actively strived to eliminate them. Nevertheless, despite its use as an abreactive treatment of the war neuroses in shell shocked soldiers during the first half of the twentieth century,[545] after the Second World War, hypnosis was no longer the scientific tool of choice to explore unconscious material.[546] Psychoanalysis having revealed the therapeutic limits of mere symptom removal by direct suggestion, hypnosis in the therapeutic setting faced the choice between disappearing or adapting. Following the latter course, it reappeared in the second half of the century, with a new, indirect and permissive form of hypnotherapy which presented itself as a reaction to—and often, against—psychoanalytic clinical theory.[547] Setting aside the question of the rivalry between analytic and non-analytic cures, this shift is relevant to our purposes, as it forced hypnosis to move away from previous, authoritative methods and create a more horizontal relation, in which hypnotherapy adapts to the subject rather than the other way around. As we shall see in this section, one of the most striking models which carried out this transformation was instigated by the work of American psychiatrist Milton H. Erickson (1901-1980).

1.2.3.1. Ericksonian Hypnosis

The main transformation underwent by hypnosis in the twentieth century occurred after the "crisis" of the emergence of psychoanalysis, in the emergence of Ericksonian hypnotherapy in the 1950s and 1960s.[548] Based on the use of indirect suggestions, cooperative dynamics, and the strategic use of verbal and nonverbal communication, these new, permissive models are forms of

[544] Roustang, 91.
[545] See Ruth Leys, "Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory," 632-43.
[546] Later called PTSD in the DSM.
[547] Once again, this thesis agrees with the hypnoanalysts when they argue that there need not be a strong opposition between analytic theory and hypnotic practice, which is a tool, rather than a conceptual framework.
[548] See *The Collected Papers of Milton H. Erickson on Hypnosis.* 4 vols. (New York and London: Irvington Publishers, 1980); and *The Seminars, Workshops, and Lectures of Milton H. Erickson,* ed. E. Rossi and M. O. Ryan (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1992).

future- and solution-oriented brief therapy. In this sense, they diverge strongly from psychoanalytic cure.[549] This utilizational and strategic—rather than insight-based—strand of therapy does not hesitate to "utilize whatever resources may advance the client's situation … whatever metaphor, layer of meaning, or technique circumstances evoked."[550]

Nevertheless, like Freudian analysis, permissive hypnotherapy also strives to produce its own form of therapeutic "neutrality." Rather than trying to avoid the production of suggestion altogether, the hypnotist makes full use of the verbal and nonverbal power of suggestion at his disposal, while maintaining a nonintrusive posture of "unknowing."

To do so, he both uses and subverts the mimetic-suggestive dimension at the heart of the therapeutic relation, by actively mirroring the subject's behavior and language. Rather than withdraw into neutral silence, he immerses himself fully and mirrors back, the worldview presented to him in the clinical assessment. The reproduction of the subject's body language and vocabulary aims to establish strong rapport and allows the operator to become a "neutral" surface, capable of receiving and reflecting the client's worldview.

In Ericksonian hypnosis, suggestions are not given directly but indirectly, so as to counter both resistance to change and resistance to hypnotic trance itself. In this framework, a successful suggestion is considered as nothing more than an autosuggestion on the part of the subject.

The various ideomotor and hypnotic phenomena that used to be considered symptoms of hysteria are now induced *by*—and acknowledged as the product *of*—verbal suggestions, with indirect techniques such as evocations, negative suggestions and double binds—all of which serve to work around resistance, while preserving the subject's autonomy and creative resources.[551] For instance, rather than command the subject to "go to sleep," the operator will offer an evocative description of the state of sleep in another—often fictional—individual, which is taken to be conducive to eliciting the state in the subject once a state of absorption and suggestibility has been

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[549] As Gilligan argues, "hypnosis, especially when applied within a context emphasizing systemic and depathologized views, enables briefer therapy." Stephen Gilligan, "In Defense of Hypnosis," in *Broader Implications of Ericksonian Therapy,* ed. S. Lankton, (London: Routledge, 1990), 10-11.

[550] Bradford Keeney and Douglas Flemons, "Milton Erickson's Lesson," in *Broader Implications of Ericksonian Therapy,* 12. In fact, Erickson practiced "short-term *and* long-term therapy; he depathologized *and* he pathologized behaviors; he could be simple and straightforward *and* complex and obscure; he would demystify *and* mystify; he operated as a change agent *and* a stability agent; he was direct *and* indirect; he used language sensitively *and* he used it like a sledgehammer; he didn't rely on medical interventions *and* he is known to have prescribed electroshock; he worked monadically *and* interpersonally; he spoke to the conscious *and* to the unconscious ... Erickson's lesson simply orients therapists to utilize what clients present. Ibid, 12-13.

[551] For a closer examination of hypnotic utterances, see Chapter 3.

attained. During hypnotic sessions, ideomotor hypnotic phenomena such as catalepsies and paralyses are not created as ends in themselves. Rather, they are co-created by the operator and the subject, and are given metaphorical functions which are tailored to each individual case. For example, the immobilization of a limb—often of an arm or a hand—will be induced to represent a difficulty in the life of the patient, which can be symbolically overcome once movement reappears.[552] Significantly, the construction of this kind of therapeutic metaphor is "the result of the interaction between the client and therapist, not a story that is imposed on the client by the correct thinking therapist."[553]

One of the main contributions of the Ericksonian model is its implementation of an "important epistemological shift from an *objective reality* to a *constructed reality"* into the field of hypnotherapy.[554] Following a constructivist framework, modern hypnotherapy rejects the notion of the observer's independence from the observed, and relies on a conception of language as "not a simple descriptive mapping of reality but a dialogic process of creating reality" that "constructs what we observe."[555] Therapeutic change, as we shall see in Chapter 4, is both manifested in, and brought about by, the ways in which the client describes himself in relation to his or her problem. The therapeutic goal of hypnosis is then to produce a transformation in the subject's beliefs, worldview, or self-perception, a "reframing" of the problem that enables alternative, more beneficial outlooks or behaviors. Just as "belief in dysfunctional structures creates our observation of such structures" in a self-reinforcing loop, "when the problem is no longer defined as a problem, it ceases to exist."[556]

Despite the active role of their hypnotic subjects and the ideal of neutrality mentioned above, as therapists *and* hypnotists, these modern operators must also acknowledge their own ineluctable participation in the phenomena which they do not merely observe, but actively co-create. In fact, the permissive approach—where the subjects are often said to be "in charge" both of the success of hypnotic phenomena and of their own therapeutic change—does not necessarily

[552] Although suggestions are given in an indirect manner, the subject still experiences them as being acted out involuntarily and automatically, even when he or she is aware of the co-creative and participatory nature of the process.
[553] William J. Matthews, "More Than a Doorway, A Shift in Epistemology," in *Broader Implications,* 18.
[554] Matthews, 16.
[555] In this framework, "we do not discover what is out there (such as with DSM-III categories); rather, we *invent* it." Matthews, 17. The constructive framework and its implications for theories of novelistic absorption will be further examined in Chapter 3.
[556] Matthews, Ibid., 19.

imply passivity on the part of the therapist.[557] In the Ericksonian model, therapists even have a responsibility to "actively influence clients to promote change."[558] However, the underlying constructivist framework of the practice also redistributes the power roles between physician and patient and greatly limits the scope of the therapist's influence:

> To use a technique to cause the desired change that 'we know would be best' for our clients is to support an expert/dummy, hierarchical model of therapy. … A constructivist, nonobjective view of the world suggests that therapy is a conversation that can have the potential for the construction of new meaning for all the participants. The therapist moves from the restrictive role of expert to that of collaborator in the construction of new meaning, a different reality.[559]

In this sense, any theoretical framework—including the categories in which the client's problem or pathology is framed and presented—can be combined with hypnotic technique. In modern hypnotherapy, therapeutic efficacy is emphasized, over "truth" or insight.

While it remains one of the most frequently practiced techniques in the therapeutic setting, the Ericksonian model does not propose a clear theorization of the nature of the hypnotic state. Instead, it dismisses this question as the object of inquiry of experimental science, and focuses on clinical cases rather than theoretical systematization. In what follows, I will thus examine the current theoretical models of hypnosis, which strikingly, do not take into consideration the difference between direct and indirect hypnosis. Furthermore, whereas Ericksonian hypnotherapy grants tremendous importance to the unique dimension of each individual case and adapts every hypnotic induction to the subject, current theories of hypnosis are mostly based on standardized hypnotic scales and pre-written inductive scripts, that fail to take into consideration individual specificities and variations between subjects. Nevertheless, these current theoretical accounts of the nature of hypnosis are relevant to our purposes, as they bring our historical examination of hypnosis full circle. Indeed, in their very attempt to objectively measure and observe hypnotic behavior, they demonstrate the ongoing oscillation between opposed explanations that were already present in the discourse of the observes of animal magnetism in 1784.

1.2.3.2. Contemporary Theories of Hypnosis: The Onion vs. The Artichoke

An examination of contemporary theories of hypnosis reveals that, strictly speaking, the original quarrel between fluidists and imaginationists, as well as materialists and spiritualists, did

[557] Gilligan, "In Defense of Hypnosis," 10.
[558] Ibid., 10.
[559] Matthews, 20.

not "end" with the birth of psychoanalysis. Rather, its original alternation can still be found, albeit in modified form, in today's opposing accounts of the nature of hypnotic phenomena. As Leon Chertock and Isabelle Stengers note, these debates, which oppose "state" and "non-state"—or as they put it, "artichoke vs. onion"[560]—explanations of hypnosis, run throughout its history and still polarize its theory to this day.[561]

Setting aside the psychoanalytic theories of hypnosis, which I will briefly summarize at the end of this section, in what follows, I will describe the two main opposing models of hypnosis that still compete today: the "cognitive" and "social-psychological" theories, which propose radically different accounts of the nature of hypnosis.

On the one hand, cognitivist ("artichoke") approaches argue in favor of the existence of an objective, altered "state" of consciousness at the heart of all hypnotic phenomena, which occurs even when the subject is unaware that he or she is being hypnotized. On the other hand, social-psychological ("onion") theories reduce hypnosis to a phenomenon that, when "peeled away," reveals not a special state, but a series of "ordinary" psychological processes such as suggestibility, imagination and role playing. In this sense, they reject the idea of an isolatable "essence" at the heart of the hypnotic experience. As Chertock and Stengers put it, "one peels an onion, removing one layer after the other, and finally nothing is left. On the other hand, the artichoke hides a heart, an essence."[562]

For many years, theories of hypnosis were dominated by cognitive explanations which strive to identify the operation of special psychological processes thought to produce a circumscribable, identifiable "hypnotic state" in the subject. This "state" approach can be traced back to the Salpêtrière school's division of hypnotism into supposedly identifiable and experimentally reproducible states, with precise criteria allowing to measure them in an "objective" manner.

As Michael Heap, Richard Brown and David Oakley have noted in *The Highly Hypnotizable Person* (2004), a common theme spanning across current "state-oriented" accounts

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[561] Indeed, the tension in current theoretical debates can be traced all the way back to the 1784 Commission: "The commissioners were partisans of the onion: 'imagination without magnetic, produces convulsions… Magnetism without imagination produces nothing,' one reads in their report… Take it away and nothing will remain. Puységur, partisan of the artichoke, replies" Take away the banquet, take away the crisis, and magnetic sleep remains." Chertock and Stengers, 242.

[562] Chertock and Stenger, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason*, 242.

of hypnosis, is the idea that it involves the inhibition of high-level cognitive processes—with the ability to experience such inhibition being an important and stable component of "hypnotizability."[563] Among these cognitive approaches to hypnosis, "dissociated control theory" and "neodissociation" theories are the most prevalent, and are united in their assumption that hypnotic responses are both characterized and facilitated by a certain degree of inhibition of high-level cognitive processes.[564]

On the other side of the spectrum, social-psychological and socio-cognitive approaches reject the "altered state" and "special process" explanations of hypnosis, conceptualizing it instead as the mere interplay of "normal," social, psychological, and—depending on the theory—cognitive, processes. In these approaches, hypnotizability is not an innate trait, but rather, varies with individual differences in expectation, motivation, role-playing abilities, and so on. These divergences are conceived as being modifiable, and not purely cognitive.[565]

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[563] Heap et al, *The Highly Hypnotizable Person. Theoretical, experimental and clinical issues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 12**. "**Despite the absence of objective markers for the hypnotic 'state,' there exist modern theoretical approaches based on the idea that hypnosis involves some 'special' process, and that this has a physiological basis." Ibid.

[564] See Heap et. al.'s summary in *The Highly Hypnotizable Person*: cognitive neuroscience's explanation of hypnosis mobilizes the "dissociated control theory" formulated by Woody and Bowers in the 1990s. This theory explains hypnotic responses as the product of a dissociation between "high- and low-level cognitive control processes": during hypnosis, higher executive control is inhibited, which "allows for the automatic activation of suggestion-related schemata by the words of the hypnotist." Which is to say, it leads to the phenomena being experienced as unfolding automatically. This impression of involuntariness is a reflection of the fact that "the seat of volition has not been involved in the generation of the suggested effect." Heap et. al., 14. In Ernest Hilgard's neodissociation theory, to which we will return to in Chapter 3, the hypnotic induction is also thought to inhibit high-level functioning. However, unlike the dissociated control theory, for Hilgard, the dissociation is not between higher and lower levels of control, but within the high-level control systems themselves. In Hilgard's model, during hypnosis, a part of the executive control in the mind continues to function as normal, while a second, dissociated, part is hidden from awareness by an "amnesic barrier." Executive control thus still remains operative but is prevented from "representing itself in consciousness." The subject is only aware of the changes in his behavior and experience, but not of the cognitive activity by these changes are created, and experiences them as occurring involuntarily. Finally, in neurophysiological models such as Gruzelier's (1998), hypnosis is conceived as a special state and divided into three stages, each with a different "neurophysiological signature": "in the first instance, the hypnotic subject concentrates carefully on the words of the induction, as evidenced by increased activity in left fronto-limbic brain areas associated with focused attention. In the second stage, the hypnotic subject 'lets go' of deliberate attentional functions and cedes executive control to the hypnotist; this is accompanied by an inhibition of activity in left frontal brain regions. Finally, there is increased activation of right-sided temporoposterior systems, as the subject becomes engaged in passive imagery and dreaming. … This inhibition of deliberate executive control renders the individual more responsive to suggestions, which operate via the reallocation of attention according to the nature of the given suggestion … hypnotic susceptibility is underpinned by superior attentional abilities that allow subjects to switch, focus and sustain their attention to relevant material during the hypnotic procedure." Heap et al, *The Highly Hypnotizable Person,* 14-20.

[565] Ibid, 12.

Social-psychological explanations of hypnosis appeared after the Second World War with the emergence of social psychology as an experimental discipline.[566] These approaches, which explain hypnosis as a psychological phenomenon, can be traced back to Bernheim's contention that suggestion can explain all hypnotic phenomena, and that the notion of a special, "hypnotic state" is both incorrect and superfluous.

Rejecting mentalistic constructs, socio-psychological explanations emphasize the situational, societal, and cultural context of the hypnotic subject's behavior.[567] Elaborated in 1969, Theodore X. Barber's task-motivational approach to hypnosis, for example, emphasized the role of "attitudes and expectancies," as well as the subject's willingness to think and imagine in compliance with the given suggestions, making the imagination—the ability to "fantasize realistically"—one of the central features of hypnosis.[568] Theodore R. Sarbin then reworked Barber's approach, using role theory to explain the hypnotic responses of the subject. Similarly, for Sarbin and Coe, "susceptible" individuals are not innately more hypnotizable. Rather, they are *motivated* to play the "role" of the good hypnotic subject, "and will, where necessary, engage in deception (and this occasionally includes self-deception) to fulfil that role."[569]

Because these social-psychological approaches use the lexical field of theater and dramaturgy to describe the behavior of hypnotic subjects, their account of hypnosis as a complex form of "as if" behavior produced a misconception (already present during the Nancy-Salpêtrière debates), of hypnosis as a form of trickery, simulation, or deception.[570]

Nevertheless, as Erika Fromm has shown, hypnotic "role-taking" is irreducible to mere simulation or complacency: it also includes a non-conscious level of response, as well as "some degree of conviction" and believing in, the role.[571] Role theory is thus able to account for the automatic, seemingly involuntary dimension of hypnotic responses: hypnotic behavior is "actively

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[566] Theodore Sarbin's concept of "role theory," initially intended as a framework to conceptualize social behavior, found widespread application in theories of hypnosis. See Theodore Sarbin and William Coe. *Hypnosis: A Social Psychological Analysis of Influence Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

[567] Kihlstrom, "The Domain of Hypnosis Revisited," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39.

[568] See for example T. X. Barber, *Hypnosis: A Scientific Approach* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969); and Barber, Spanos, and Chaves, *Hypnosis, Imagination, and Human Potentialities* (New York: Pergamon, 1974).

[569] Sarbin and Coe, *Hypnosis: A Social Psychological Analysis of Influence Communication.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), in Heap et al, 20.

[570] In this work, I argue that on the contrary, role taking does not necessarily imply deception on the part of the subject, and successful games of make-believe are experienced as genuine by their participants. See Chapter 3.

[571] Erika Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis,* 17. "The deeply hypnotized person has integrated the role at a level that involves participation of the total organism, both psychologically and physiologically."

and voluntarily directed by the subject (though the subject is not consciously aware of his decision making and voluntarism.)"[572]

Socio-cognitive approaches such as those of Nicholas Spanos (1991) also emphasize the importance of the subject's activity in the production of hypnotic phenomena, focusing especially on task-motivation, attitudes and expectancies.[573] In these approaches, the role of hypnotic inductions is not to encourage subjects to enter a "trance state," but to enhance their sense of expectation and motivation to respond to suggestions.[574] Spanos thus described hypnosis as a "strategic enactment," shaped by the subject's understanding of "task demands," which are previously—and often implicitly—negotiated with the hypnotist.[575] During hypnosis, the subject thus remains highly active. Elaborating cognitive strategies to comply with the operator's explicit and implicit instructions, he produces behaviors that fit his idea of what a "good" hypnotic subject would do.[576]

Steven J. Lynn and Irving Kirsch's "sociocognitive" explanation also underlines the central role of "response expectancies" in the subject's hypnotic experience and behavior.[577] According to Kirsch, the hypnotist creates the expectancy that the subject will have certain experiences and responses, which in a motivated subject, is sufficient for these experiences to occur.[578] For him,

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[572] Fromm, Ibid., 13.

[573] See Spanos, "A Sociocognitive approach to Hypnosis," in Lynn and Rhue, eds. *Theories of Hypnosis: Current models and Perspectives*, 324–361. (New York: Guilford Press, 1991). When expectations are experimentally manipulated, the subject's responses to suggestions are modified. For example, negative expectations tend to inhibit the subject's responses.

[574] Heap et al, 18. "So long as the induction procedure fulfils these aims (and defines the context as 'hypnosis') then the content of the induction procedure is less important, at least so far as enhancing the subject's responsiveness to suggestion is concerned … Laboratory subjects who are presented with instructions designed to increase their motivation respond well to hypnotic suggestions even in the absence of an induction and deepening routine. Likewise, there is evidence that 'dummy' procedures presented as 'genuine' induction methods (such as inhaling an inert gas or swallowing a pill bearing the word 'hypnosis') have the same effect on suggestibility as a traditional induction. This casts doubt on the idea that traditional procedures put subjects into a unique or special state characterized by extreme suggestibility." Heap et al, 18.

[575] Kihlstrom, 39. As Kihlstrom explains, "Spanos argued that reports of experienced involuntariness were in part misattributions shaped by the structure of the suggestions administered to subjects (Spanos and DeGroh, 1983), as well as a strategy for subjects to present themselves as deeply hypnotized (Spanos et al., 1985). These elaborations of role theory, coupled with a debunking tendency (Spanos et al., 1982), also left the impression that hypnotic subjects were engaged in "something akin to faking." Kihlstrom, 39.

[576] See Spanos, "A Sociocognitive approach to Hypnosis," 324–361.

[577] As Kihlstrom points out, the main difference between Kirsch and Lynn's social-cognitive approach and Spanos's sociocognitive approach lie in their conceptions of the experience of involuntariness in the subject.

[578] Irving Kirsch, "The social learning theory of hypnosis," in *Theories of Hypnosis*, 466. See also J.R. Council; I. Kirsch and Grant, D. L. "Imagination, expectancy, and hypnotic responding," in *Hypnosis and Imagination,* ed. R. G. Kunzendorf, N. P. Spanos and B. Wallace (New York: Baywood, 1996), 41-65.

response-expectancy is thus the essence, rather than a mere by-product, of hypnosis.[579] When hypnotic phenomena are experienced as being automatic or involuntary, it is due to the subject's own attribution of these qualities to the phenomena, because of the expectations generated by the hypnotic context.[580] Like Bernheim, these sociocognitive approaches claim that "low-susceptible" individuals can be trained to become more, or even highly, susceptible.

Finally, the third theoretical model of hypnosis can be found in post-Freudian psychoanalytic approaches.[581] Although these theories belong to "state" accounts of hypnosis, their psychodynamic orientation requires that we examine them separately from the cognitivist approaches discussed higher up. These accounts of hypnosis reveal the ways in which hypnotic practice and analytic theory can be compatible. This is especially the case in hypnoanalysis, which uses hypnotic trance as a means to access unconscious material, that is interpreted from within the psychoanalytic framework.[582]

According to hypnotically-oriented psychoanalysts such as Erika Fromm and Michael Nash, hypnosis is a regression "in the service of the ego."[583] This is not a total regression but rather, a regression to primary process thinking, which reduces the "general reality orientation" that

[579] As Heap. et. al explain, Kirsch has gone further than most sociocognitive theorists in challenging traditional ideas about hypnotizability. For Kirsch, the standardized hypnotic scales don't measure hypnotizability but "imaginative suggestibility," which also operates in non-hypnotic contexts, in the absence of a hypnotic induction. Heap et al, 20-21. Our extensive notion of hypnosis fits this conception, as well as the idea that hypnosis need not be explicitly mentioned or formally induced to be operating.

[580] Heap et. al., 21. As Kihlstrom explains, "expectancies, shaped by suggestions and other aspects of the social context, function like ideas; and the idea of an action leads automatically to its execution. Thus, involuntariness is neither a misattribution nor an element of strategic self-presentation; instead, it is a genuine, subjectively convincing phenomenal experience, even if it is attributable to suggestion, not hypnosis as a special state." Kihlstrom, 39.

[581] For a more detailed account of the ways in which psychoanalytic theory and hypnosis can be reconciled, see Appendix A. As we saw higher up, Freud's explanation of hypnotic suggestibility and the patient's "credulous submissiveness" is formulated in terms of libidinal fixation and regression in the transference: hypnotic trance is "an unconscious fixation of the subject's libido onto the figure of the hypnotist, through the medium of the masochistic component of the sexual instinct." Freud, in *SE,* 7:150, note 1. For Freud, the hypnotic relation both revives ancient infantile relations to parental objects in the adult, and "recapitulates the relation of the individual member of the primal horde to the primal father." Freud, *Group Psychology*, 127. Thus, hypnosis is a double regression, ontogenetic and cultural, in this reemergence of a "vaguely remembered cultural primitiveness" Ibid.

[582] Lewis Wolberg is one of the pioneers of hypnoanalysis. See Wolberg, *Hypnoanalysis* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1945); Erika Fromm and Daniel P. Brown, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis* (Hillsdale NJ and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers), 1986. For a more detailed exploration of hypnoanalysis, see Appendix A.

[583] Heap et al, 12. See Erika Fromm, "The nature of hypnosis and other altered states of consciousness: An ego-psychological theory," in *Hypnosis: Developments in Research and New Perspectives*, eds. E. Fromm and R. Shor (New York: Aldine, 1979), 81-103; Fromm Erika and Michael R. Nash, *Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis* (Madison CT: International Universities Press, 1997); and Erika Fromm, *An Ego-psychological theory of hypnosis,* in Fromm and Nash, eds, *Contemporary Hypnosis Research*, (New York: Guilford, Press, 1992).

characterizes ordinary psychological functioning, and blurs the distinction between reality and the imaginary.

In Fromm's ego-psychological model,[584] the regression occurring in hypnosis—which creates a shift from "sophisticated, logical thought" to more "primitive and illogical mental activity"—accounts for the increased suggestibility of the hypnotic subject.[585] Although Fromm also describes it as "a highly cognitive process," she defines hypnosis as a combination of this "increase in primary process thinking, a natural loosening of defenses, and a reduction of the subject's general reality orientation and its customary logical thinking."[586] For her, hypnotic suggestibility and trance are defined as a state of "ego receptivity," which provides access "to bodily sensations, emotions, memories, and fantasies that are usually beyond the [subject's] grasp in waking consciousness."[587] In this state, where "critical judgment, strict adherence to reality orientation, and active, goal-directed thinking, are help to a minimum," unconscious and preconscious material can "float freely into [the subject's] mind" and repressed conflicts and affects can surface, "faster" than in analysis.[588]

For Nash, although hypnosis is also a form of ego regression, "it is perfectly clear that this regression does not encompass the entire I-ness of the subject."[589] Unlike Fromm—for whom hypnotic regression is both temporal and topographic—Nash contends that the regression involved is hypnosis is solely topographic, and that "likening the hypnotic state to earlier stages of psychic functioning is misleading."[590] Indeed, as Nash argues, child development cannot be undone and earlier stages can thus not be "regressed" back to.[591] As Nash explains, this argument is supported by theories of memory that, as we will see in Chapter 4, acknowledge "an ongoing interaction

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[584] Ego-psychology draws a basic distinction between primary and secondary mental processes, formulated by Freud: "the primary processes are emotional, holistic, illogical, unconscious and developmentally immature forms of mental processing, which are primitive but thought to be the source of creativity. Secondary processes, in contrast, are affect-free, analytic, logical, conscious and developmentally mature, and are said to be the seat of reason. Normal adult functioning is biased towards secondary processing." Heap et al., 12-13.
[585] Heap et al, 12. See Fromm, *An Ego-psychological Theory of Hypnosis,* 131-148.
[586] Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis,* 13; 143.
[587] Fromm opposes ego receptivity to ego activity (volitional) and ego passivity (overwhelm or helplessness). "In the receptive mode, one allows things to happen; one does not make them happen." See Fromm, Ibid., 202-3; 15.
[588] Fromm and Nash, 273; Fromm, *Hypnotherapy,* 202.
[589] Nash, "Hypnosis as a Special Case of Psychological Regression," in *Theories of Hypnosis: Current Models and Perspectives*, ed. S. J. Lynn and J. W. Rhue (Guilford, New York, 1991), 187-8.
[590] Nash, in *Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis*, 37; Lynn et. al., *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis,* 18. For Nash this topographic regression involves specific properties that "go well beyond aggression phenomena" and include "an increase in primary process material, more spontaneous and intense emotion, unusual body sensations, the experience of nonvolition, and the tendency to displace core attributes of important others onto the hypnotist (e.g., transference).
[591] Fromm and Nash, 37.

between memory traces and contemporary factors such as expectation, cultural press, suggestion, and transference."[592] Therefore:

> From a psychoanalytic perspective, it appears that even during the most compelling hypnotic performances, there is a portion of the ego that does not engage, that remains apart, that does not participate in the regression. If hypnosis were a topographic regression across the entire ego, it would be like dreaming or a psychotic state, with little or no chance for the subject to initiate, focus, change or terminate the experience because the *entire* ego is a participant. From a socio-psychological, analytic or neodissociationist perspective, it is clear that hypnotic subjects do respond to cues that are incompatible with their hypnotic role—whether we examine hidden-observer phenomena, duality in hypnotic age regression, or differential effects of prehypnosis instructions.[593]

Despite their divergences, in their analytic account of hypnotic experience, both Nash and Fromm place "less emphasis on sexual and aggressive instincts … and relatively greater emphasis on the availability of imagination, fantasy, and other expressions of primary process thinking during hypnosis."[594] In this way, they move away from Freud's 1905 definition of hypnosis as "an unconscious fixation of the subject's libido to the figure of the hypnotist, through the medium of the masochistic components of the sexual instinct."[595]

As John Kihlstrom has observed, these three theoretical explanations of hypnosis still compete to this day. However, as Kihlstrom argues, upon closer inspection, the distinction between 'state' or 'special process' theories, and 'non-state' theories is "not as clear-cut as much of the literature suggests."[596] In fact, cognitive and socio-cognitive accounts of hypnosis "are not mutually exclusive," and a comprehensive explanation of hypnotic phenomena must embrace concepts from several schools of thought:[597]

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[592] Ibid., 37.
[593] Nash, "Hypnosis as a Special Case of Psychological Regression." In *Theories of Hypnosis: Current Models and Perspectives*, ed. S. J. Lynn and J. W. Rhue (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 187-188.
[594] Lynn et al, *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis*, 18.
[595] Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," in *SE,* 7:150.
[596] Kihlstrom, 41. Furthermore, the "state vs. non-state" and "onion vs. artichoke" binaries do not overlap completely. Indeed, some "non-state theorists still attribute "essence" to the various cultural phenomena which hypnosis or suggestion is manifested. For neuro-cognitivist theorists, this "essence" is a special "state" of the human cognitive apparatus. For social-psychological theorists, it is imagination, role-playing or suggestion. For psychoanalysis, the essence is transference: for instance, "Mannoni affirms that what we can call artichokes, that is, possession and other mystic phenomena, the ceremony of the banquet [see chapter 1], the beliefs of the magnetists, analytic theory, all have the same heart, all clothe the same nontheorizable 'remainder' with their discourse and their cultural practices." Chertock and Stengers, 243. In their conclusion, Chertock and Stengers argue that insofar as both approaches aim for the same goal—to "eliminate, purify and control" the hypnotic situation "in order to identify the 'core' phenomenon, or to conclude that nothing remains"—both are "two sides of the same coin," that of experimental reason." Chertock and Stengers, 249.
[597] Kihlstrom, 41. For Kihlstrom, the problem is "that of simultaneously maintaining an interest in the cognitive processes by which consciousness is divided in hypnosis, and an interest in the social context in which hypnosis takes place." Ibid.

> We should abandon the stance of either–or and adopt a new stance of both–and. This 'third way' in hypnosis research construes hypnosis simultaneously as both a state of (sometimes) profound cognitive change, involving basic mechanisms of cognition and consciousness, and as a social interaction, in which hypnotist and subject come together for a specific purpose within a wider socio-cultural context.[598]

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As I have suggested in this chapter, not only did hypnotic practice come into existence through the process of "dematerialization" described by Mayer, it did so by also constantly replaying the initial debate between material and psychological explanations, which echoes the onion vs. artichoke division. In this way, two intertwining, continuous but nonlinear movements can be traced throughout its history.

Indeed, whether it opposes the animal magnetists to the 1784 commissioners, the mesmeric fluidists to the imaginationists, or the Nancy school to the Salpêtrière, this fundamental opposition replayed itself in various forms for more than two centuries, and thus complicates the image of a single historical moment during which hypnotism emerged as a psychologized version of magnetism. As I will show in the following chapter, this polarization—which, as Ruth Leys has observed, is effectively captured by opposition between mimesis and anti-mimesis—can be traced not only throughout the history of hypnosis as a practice, but also as an object of literary representation.[599] During the nineteenth century, these aspects were closely linked, due to the mutual influence and circulation between medical and literary discourse. In this sense, an examination of the literary depictions of hypnosis and its emergence from its material, magnetic ancestor, will help further illuminate the ways in which its history follows this vacillating and spiraling—rather than purely linear—movement.

[598] Ibid., 41.
[599] See Leys, *Trauma,* 50.

Chapter 2. From Enthusiasm to Anxiety. Representations of Hypnosis in Nineteenth-Century Fiction.

It is said that every night, when came the moment to go to sleep, Saint-Pol Roux had a sign hung on the door of his Camaret mansion, which said: THE POET IS AT WORK.
—André Breton, (1954).

As Michael Finn writes in *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious,* "when novelists began to connect the words 'hypnotism' and 'pathological', a new world of fictional plots opened up."[600] In this chapter, I will discuss the various "new worlds" that opened up for nineteenth-century readers and writers of narrative literature as hypnotism emerged from the older, Mesmeric models. To do so, I will examine the shift which occurred in literary representation of hypnosis, from early and mid-century enthusiasm to *fin-de-siècle* fear and fascination.[601]

Until well into the nineteenth century, hypnotism remained associated with its magnetic "parent" in literary and popular imaginations. Up until the end of the 1870s, often paired with the vague label, "Mesmerism," it struggled to rid itself from the aura of spiritualism and occultism that followed it everywhere. Outside of medical circles and societies of magnetic practitioners, magnetism exerted its strong fascination on both literary and popular imaginations, due to the extraordinary implications that it opened up, on both philosophical and spiritual levels. During the first half of the century, authors of literary fiction across the francophone and anglophone worlds used magnetism as a means to challenge existing epistemological, metaphysical, and even cosmological frameworks, to stretch the limits of the naturally possible. However, as the end of the century approached—as medical knowledge of the psychological phenomenon of hypnotism spread across Europe and more psychologically oriented explanations of the unconscious began to appear—the earlier enthusiasm transformed into a fascinated anxiety. This anxious sentiment was fueled by the rapid cultural, scientific and political transformations of the period, which novelists

[600] Michael Finn, *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious from Flaubert to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 127.
[601] Although my general argument centers on the novel, in this chapter, I extend it to narrative prose in general, examining novellas and short stories in addition to novels, as these were widely used in Gothic fiction and *fin-de-siècle* literary representations of hypnotism. My argument can thus be considered as applying to narrative prose, in its opposition to poetry.

both represented and conveyed in their texts, by portraying hypnotism in a new, worrying light. Absorbing pathologizing theories of hypnotism such as those of Charcot or Janet, as well as the seemingly extra-ordinary phenomena described by the Nancy school such as post-hypnotic or "hypnotic crimes"—they produced new representations of hypnotism linked to new, anxious ways of processing the relation between the self and its Other, whether psychological, social, political or moral. Whereas in the first half of the century, Mesmerism served as a means to interrogate the limits between the natural and the supernatural, at the end of the century, hypnotism became a literary metaphor for the dispossession of the subject. Therefore, by questioning the certainty of the knowable—which now extended to the subject's own interiority—hypnosis was a powerful tool to express underlying fears which permeated late nineteenth century France and Victorian society. Although many literary authors were fascinated by its scientific dimension and used hypnotism to explain a wide array of seemingly occult or supernatural phenomena, including those of magnetism, they also associated hypnotism with the unnatural, the pathological, sometimes even the monstrous. In parallel to the dematerialization which occurred in the medical field, in its depictions of hypnosis, the literary field expressed an increased awareness, both of the limits of the self, and of the extra-ordinary powers of the individual mind—which, as hypnosis reveals to the modern subject, can no longer claim to fully know or control itself.

In the first part of this chapter, I examine the mid-century enthusiasm by comparing Balzac's 1842 novel *Ursule Mirouët* and three short stories about Mesmerism written by Edgar Allan Poe from 1843 to 1845. Despite the "radical redefinition" of magnetism brought about by Braid's theory of hypnotism (described in Chapter 1), mid-century fictional representations still widely drew on the old, magnetic model, using the general terminology of "Mesmeric sleep" and "passes," and positing the existence of the imponderable fluid as an object of scientific investigation. In both of these authors, the interest in Mesmerism goes hand in hand with a fascination for the scientific possibilities it opens up, as well as the spiritualist and occult elements associated with it. As I will argue, while Balzac represents magnetism as a *subversive* power whose philosophical impact can overturn the post-Enlightenment presuppositions of material monism, Poe's stories take matters even further by using it as conceptual tool to suspend the usual relations between the material and spiritual, and to imagine a literal state of *suspension* between life and death. By linking it to spiritualist—rather than psychological—concerns, both of these conceptions reveal inherent ambiguity in the relation between Mesmerism and orthodox medicine in the first

half of the century. Indeed, while on the one hand, it serves as the "hand-maiden" of medical discourse, on the other, hypnosis also poses a serious challenge to the authority of orthodox medicine and rationalist discourse of the time.[602]

In the conceptual vocabulary available in mid-century representations, the realm of "otherness" opened up by magnetism is not yet that of a psychical unconscious. Rather, it is that of an immaterial and spiritual plane which remains inaccessible to the ordinary, waking mind, and can be accessed through the altered states of consciousness produced by Mesmeric sleep. In other words, magnetism is associated with the spiritual, rather than the psychological. With the advent of experimental and positivist science later in the century however, Mesmerism's associations with spiritualism and the occult lead to increasingly skeptic criticism, one of the most striking of which can be found in chapter VIII of Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* which I will turn to at the end of the first section. On the one hand, Flaubert's work presents a parodic representation of the fallacious reasoning inherent in fluidist and spiritualist conceptions of magnetism. On the other, by retrospectively looking back, from the perspective of 1870s to the earlier mid-century enthusiasm, Flaubert's text also documents the shift in terminology and paradigms that occurred with the dematerialization of magnetism and the emergence of hypnotism proper. As we shall see, the distinction between magnetism and hypnotism was not always clearly established outside of the medical field until the end of the century. In literary representations of hypnosis, the boundary between both practices was often blurred and used strategically, both by critical discourses which aimed to denounce the "irrationality" of the practice, and by novelists themselves, in order to emphasize its fascinating aspects and poetic-philosophical potential.[603]

In the second part of the chapter, I then turn to *fin-de-siècle* literary representations of hypnotism and propose a comparison between Maupassant's *Le Horla,* Conan Doyle's *The*

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[602] Sidney Lind, "Poe and Mesmerism," *PMLA* 62, No. 4 (Dec. 1947):1077.

[603] As Hilary Grimes has shown, "despite attempts to make hypnotism a scientific branch of study that was distinct from and in opposition to mesmerism … the discourse on hypnotism at the fin de siècle was actually a blend of ideas about mesmerism's supernatural powers and hypnotism's practical purpose in the field of psychology, developing in the 1880s and 1890s. ... In the popular imagination and in fiction, particularly in the Gothic fiction of the 1880s and 1890s, the practices often merged into one another." Whereas in France, the work of Charcot and Bernheim lead to a cleaner separation between both fields, in Victorian Britain, even "by the end of the century, handbooks about hypnotism could not be distinguished from those on mesmerism because their vocabulary and goals were so similar." Indeed, James Coates, in his 1897 *Human Magnetism or How to Hypnotise: A Practical Handbook for Students of Mesmerism*, remarks that "[p]ractically, hypnotism is mesmerism. The phenomena observed being similar, change of name cannot alter them." See: Hilary Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic: Mental Science, the Uncanny, and Scenes of Writing* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 63-64; 79.

Parasite and Du Maurier's *Trilby.* By offering close readings of these prose texts, my goal is to show how fictional representations of hypnosis radicalized both the fearful and the fascinating aspects of the practice. Armed with a new vocabulary and a more scientific conception of the practice, these authors used hypnosis as a general metaphor for dispossession, giving form to various psychological, social and political anxieties inherent to late nineteenth-century France and Great Britain. Although the concept of suggestion had by then replaced that of supernatural intervention, it served a similar function: to indicate the subject's vulnerability in the face of forces which he or she cannot control. These forces point to the lack of self-mastery and fragility of the subject's conscious mind and identity, in an increasingly complex world of burgeoning mass communication and modernity. For the late nineteenth-century subject, "if everyone was influenced by everyone else, then identity itself was at risk, not only of mingling dangerously with other sexualities, nationalities, races, classes, and genders, but also of deteriorating or dispersing altogether."[604]

As we shall see, for these three authors, the unconscious mental processes revealed by hypnotic phenomena—such as dual personalities, post-hypnotic suggestion and amnesia, automatism and monoideism—serve to thematize, reveal and, to a certain extent, exorcize the anxieties of a conscious, rational subject forced to acknowledge his own impotence.[605] In these texts, the internal threat or anxiety is projected outwards and represented as an external, often personified menace—such as the Horla, Miss Penclosa or Svengali—which in turn, threatens to possess, contaminate and overpower the subject from without. In this way, by serving as a medium to represent this process of dispossession with a seemingly scientific vocabulary, hypnosis conveniently provides relief from having to acknowledge the multiple forces—unconscious, economic, social, political or moral—acting upon a subject who, even before Freud, is no longer master in his own house.[606]

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[604] Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic,* 81.

[605] This echoes the remarks of Daniel Pick who writes, "hypnosis complicated Victorian ideas about the nature of the self, the subliminal aspects of *all* relationships, the indeterminate border between covert command and creative collaboration, inspiration and interference, partnership and possession." Pick, *Svengali's Web,* 64, emphasis in the text.

[606] See Sigmund Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 142.

2.1. From Mid-Century Enthusiasm to Skepticism

2.1.1. Magnetism as Subversion: Balzac's *Ursule Mirouët*

The enthusiasm for the scientific, philosophical and novelistic potential of magnetism that occurred in France the 1840s can be found in Balzac's 1842 novel *Ursule Mirouët*, where the author of the *Comédie Humaine* introduces Mesmerism in the broader framework of his interest in spiritualism, as a response to post-Enlightenment materialist monism. This conception linked the belief in a *material* magnetic fluid and the *spiritual* possibilities that it implied.

Ursule Mirouët tells the story of a bourgeois family, the Minoret-Cremière, who is torn apart by its members' desire to gain the inheritance of the Dr. Minoret in the provincial town of Nemours. The doctor Minoret's adoptive niece, Ursule, is a fervent Christian and the only member of the family to demonstrate pure, disinterested love for her uncle. Although Minoret is presented as a strict atheist at the beginning of the novel, his encounter with magnetism suddenly leads him to open up to the spiritualist position and to the religious faith so dear to his niece.

In Balzac's novel, as a thematic object, magnetism provides an explanation for supernatural phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance and communication with the dead. Its main narrative function in the text, however, is to trigger the doctor's conversion to Christianity. Formally, the novelistic treatment of magnetism leads Balzac to move from realism, into the realm of the fantastic, thereby creating a world of signification in which the material points to a dimension which transcends it, and can only be accessed by the "visionary" artist and the "magnetic" subject. Balzac also uses the magnetotrope to thematize the various character relations in the novel, where its lexical field serves to redefine the relations between the material and the spiritual, and capture the dynamics of attraction at the heart of human intersubjectivity.

2.1.1.1. A Treatise on Magnetism

In accordance with the encyclopedic ambitions of the *Comédie Humaine*, Balzac's literary treatment of magnetism often involves blending the genre of the essay—or the philosophical or medical treatise—into that of novelistic prose. Balzac also uses specific characters to embody various philosophical positions and dramatize the tensions between them. In the beginning of *Ursule Mirouët,* magnetism is therefore introduced as a disruption to the materialist and skeptical

position of the main character, whose worldview is characteristic of the Enlightenment way of thinking. Indeed, the Dr. Minoret is an atheist, rationalist, philosophical materialist and skeptic, an adept of Diderot and Condillac. Magnetism is presented to him by his friend and former colleague, Dr. Bouvard. However, although it is linked to spiritualism later on in the text, here it is introduced from within the materialistic paradigm, as a scientific innovation—the "science of imponderable fluids"—rather than a superstitious belief-system or an occult phenomenon. This theoretical introduction of magnetism *via* materialism thus reinforces its subversive power to cause disturbance in the character's worldview and the narrative structure. Against this background, it will create a violent disruption of materialist monism, with both scientific and philosophical implications.

Before any disruption, however, the narrator's theoretical and historical *exposé* begins by presenting magnetism as both a central philosophical question and an empirical fact, whose "discovery" by Mesmer makes the latter a true "pioneer" of his time.[607] Here, the text constructs a parallel between the "discovery" of magnetism by Mesmer, and its experiencing by the Dr. Minoret, both of which are "one of those events … which ploughs up the field of conviction to the chalk and overturns it."[608] The image of "ploughing" suggests the depth of a personal and epistemological upheaval, as well as the growth of something new, which will emerge from the fertile soil of a revolution in paradigms both scientific and metaphysical.[609]

According to Balzac's narrator, the failure of Mesmerism was due to the *revolutionary* dimension of Mesmer's "science," rather than its inaccuracy. Its demise can be explained by the dogmatic, even fanatic mindset of Mesmer's contemporaries; to the ignorance, in his time, of "the role played by hitherto unobserved imponderables in Nature."[610] Although the narrator claims that the possible uses of the fluid are much wider than those Mesmer made of it, he also describes the 1784 Bailly commission's condemnation as a form of ignorance comparable to "the fate that truth

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[607] Balzac, *Ursule Mirouët.* 1842, in *The Novels of Honoré de Balzac,* trans. May Tomlinson, (Philadelphia: Barrie & Son, 1897), 87.
[608] Balzac, Ibid., 87.
[609] Ibid., 87. This revolutionary or disruptive power of magnetism is linked to the affective upheavals that can occur in the aesthetic experience, as we shall see in Chapter 4. Here, it is compared to the strong divisions among artistic schools: "Toward the end of the eighteenth century, science was as entirely divided about Mesmer's appearance, as art had been about that of Gluck. Mesmer had, then, followers and antagonists as keen as were the Piccinists against the Gluckists." Ibid.
[610] "Magnetism has more applications; in Mesmer's hands it was, as regards its prospects, what principle is to effect." Ibid., 87.

had met with in the person of Galileo in the sixteenth century."[611] According to the narrator, Mesmer's downfall was caused by attacks emanating from two seemingly opposed camps: religion on the one hand, and the Enlightenment on the other: "magnetism was scouted by the united attacks of religious people and materialistic philosophers, alike alarmed."[612] From this initial presentation, then, the Balzacian narrator seems not only informed on the history of magnetism, but also sympathetic to its inventor, placing scientific truth on his side, *against* the materialist philosophers of the Enlightenment.[613]

The text then goes on to retracing the history of the imponderable fluid before its discovery in the West—it was "cultivated equally by Egypt and Chaldea, by Greece and India"[614]—and after Mesmer: "the phenomena of somnambulism, barely surmised by Mesmer, were due to Messieurs de Puységur and Deleuze; but the Revolution put a stop to these discoveries which gave success to the cause of the scholars and mockers."[615] The fluid itself is described as "a penetrating influence, leading from man to man, worked by the will, healing by the abundance of fluid, the exercise of which constituted a duel between two wills, between an evil to be cured and the will to cure it."[616] The reader is thus informed from the start that the narrator's conception of magnetism will not follow Mesmer's materialism, but rather, corresponds to the ulterior psychofluidist philosophy initiated by Puységur's model.

Indeed, whereas for Mesmer its existence was undoubtedly material, in Balzac, magnetism ultimately allows for a refutation of materialism. In fact, Balzac's text takes an extra step beyond Puységur's emphasis on the will: by closely associating the fluid with the spiritual, it turns it into a divine principle of sorts, albeit one which can still be an object of scientific explanation. This explains the delicate balance, constantly held by the text, between on the one hand, the association of magnetism with religion—"Christ's favorite science and one of the divine powers remitted to the apostles"[617]—and on the other, the emphasis of the persecution it underwent by religious

[611] Ibid., 87.
[612] Ibid., 88.
[613] "It was necessary to recognize the existence of intangible, invisible and imponderable fluids, three negations which the science of that time insisted upon considering as a definition of space… According to materialists particularly, the world is full, everything is connected, everything is linked together and everything is contrived… Those wretched men, who deified anything rather than acknowledge God, also shrank before the infinite divisibility of matter that the nature of imponderable forces admits of." Ibid, 88.
[614] Ibid., 87.
[615] Ibid., 89.
[616] Ibid.
[617] Ibid., 88.

authorities. Indeed, Balzac's narrator emphasizes the clergy's hostility towards it, invoking it as a rational—and blasphemous—explanation of religious miracles, such as those "of the Convulsionaries, hushed up by the Church … in spite of the valuable pamphlets of the Councillor Carré de Montgeron."[618] Magnetism thus unites opposing binaries: it is both a "new faith" and an object of "persecution," while simultaneously being a "march of intelligence," a new science of the future.[619]

In this context, the clergy and the philosophers of the Enlightenment are both grouped into a single category, guilty of committing similarly ignorant crimes, blinded by their dogmatism: "The Encyclopedia and the clergy could not reconcile themselves to this old human power which seemed so new."[620] The survival of magnetism in the margins of history, at the moment of Mesmer's condemnation, is described as the product of courage and rebellion, especially for those men of science brave enough to resist the medical orthodoxy of the time: "A few doctors were amongst the believers. Until their death these dissenters were persecuted by their fellow physicians. The respectable body of Paris doctors displayed all the harshness of the religious wars towards the Mesmerists, and were as cruel in their hatred for them as it was possible to be in that time. … Only priests, magistrates and doctors can hate like that."[621]With this delicate balance and double opposition—to both religion and the Enlightenment—the Balzacian narrator can thus gradually construct a theory of a spiritualist science, which refutes both materialist monism and religious fanaticism.

In this "new" science, the magnetic fluid provides an empirical explanation—as the "source"—of a tremendous diversity of phenomena, ranging from the physical, to the occult, to those involving the human will, which we would now call psychological: "magnetic facts, and somnambulistic miracles, those of divination and entrancement which allowed penetration into the spiritual world, were accumulating."[622] The "fact" of magnetism is thus only supernatural in appearance. The spiritual and the scientific, far from being incompatible, can—and perhaps even

[618] Ibid., 88.
[619] Ibid., 90; 92.
[620] Ibid., 88.
[621] Ibid., 90. The mid-century conception of magnetism, as we saw with James braid, also intersected with phrenology: "magnetism, which is so closely allied … to light and electricity… Phrenology and physiognomy … proved to the eyes of more than one physiologist the traces of an imperceptible fluid, the base of the phenomena of the human will, the source of the passions and habits, the forms of face and those of the skull." In this conception, magnetism is defined as the "source" of a variety of parapsychological phenomena and as the empirically observable "source" of the human will. Ibid., 90-92
[622] Ibid., 92.

should—be united: "those facts were nevertheless taking place, which were styled marvelous by superficial observers."[623]

Therefore, in the opening pages of the novel, the theoretical introduction of magnetism destabilizes the expected relations between science and religion, between the material and the spiritual. On a diegetic level, by blurring the boundaries between belief and knowledge, magnetism prepares for the reconciliation of Dr. Minoret with his colleague Dr. Bouvard. Indeed, both doctors had become estranged because of the latter's enthusiasm for Mesmerism and the former's hostile skepticism. In this way, the theory of magnetism presented at the beginning of the text sets the stage for its disruptive power to be transferred further on, from the theoretical, historical level, to the narrative level and the plot. Magnetism's capacity to open up new possibilities and overturn—or "plough"—the established balance and *status quo* is thus central to its introduction into the fictional space.

2.1.1.2. An Extraordinary Man

The main catalyst for this transformation is of course the magnetist himself, whom Dr. Minoret encounters upon receiving a letter from Dr. Bouvard and agreeing to witness a demonstration. In this scene, the magnetist—also referred to as the "Swedenborgian"—is presented as a "fascinating" figure who inspires both fear and attraction. His description reproduces early nineteenth-century conceptions that attribute extraordinary "powers" to the operator and neglect the role played by the subject:

> Just then an extraordinary man was making himself known in Paris, gifted by faith with an incalculable power, and making use of the magnetic powers in all their applications. Not only did this great unknown man, who is yet living, himself suddenly and radically cure the most cruel and most inveterate illnesses from a distance, like the Savior of mankind did formerly; but he would also produce the most curious instantaneous phenomena of somnambulism by mastering the most rebellious wills. The physiognomy of this stranger, who says to depend only upon God and to communicate with the angels, like Swedenborg, resembles a lion; a concentrated, irresistible strength flashes from it. His singularly distorted features have a terrible and startling appearance; his voice, which comes from the depths of his being, is as if charged with magnetic fluid, it penetrates the hearer through every pore.[624]

[623] Ibid., 87-92.
[624] Balzac, *Ursule Mirouët,* 94.

In this description, as Bertrand Méheust has noted, the novelistic imagination "takes its liberties" with historical facts when it attributes supernatural powers to the operator.[625] Indeed, Balzac's magnetist appears as an "extraordinary" being who communicates with the transcendent realm of the divine. His role consists in channeling the magnetic energy and its "incalculable power," which is both curative and "curious" in the effects it produces. Significantly, these powers are directly linked to the magnetist's "faith." The analogy between his ability to "radically cure ... the most cruel and most inveterate illnesses" from a distance—which, according to Méheust, "no magnetist of the time ever claimed to have been able to do"—and the figure of Christ, turns him into a holy thaumaturge of sorts.

Furthermore, the Christ-like image of the "lion" concentrates the ambivalence at the heart of the phenomenon of magnetic fascination: the magnetist's power is both heavenly and earthly (animalistic), powerful but also potentially frightening. On the one hand, "a concentrated, irresistible strength flashes from" him, like the fluid itself.[626] On the other, by describing his features as "singularly distorted," "terrible" and "startling," the Balzacian text blends together physical traits with moral attributes, suggesting that his appearance also contains a repulsive and "unnatural" dimension.[627] This gesture of juxtaposing the fascinating with the physically repulsive will be reproduced in countless descriptions of the magnetist-hypnotist figure in nineteenth-century fiction and popular culture.[628]

Balzac's description ends with the evocation of the magnetist's voice, which comes from "the depths of his being" rather than the heavens. This reinforces the "earthly" dimension, by evoking a descending movement rather than an ascension.[629] The fact that the voice is "charged with magnetic fluid," creates a double effect: it materializes the immaterial (voice) in the fluid, and enchants the ordinary by charging it with quasi-supernatural properties.[630] The image of the

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[625] Bertrand Méheust, "Balzac et le magnétisme animal: *Louis Lambert, Ursule Mirouet, Seraphita*," *In*: *Traces du mesmerisme dans les littératures européennes du XIX° siècle* (Brussels: Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 2001). Méheust argues that in this sense, Balzac's description is opposed to what was usually found in the discourse of psychofluidist practitioners such as Deleuze and Puységur. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the extraordinary dimension of the therapeutic powers of magnetism also invents "a sort of ideal magnetist, which paradoxically will serve as "a model for ulterior developments" and literary descriptions of magnetism. Méheust, 4; 9.

[626] Balzac, *Ursule Mirouët*, 94.

[627] Balzac, Ibid., 94. The French term for "startling" is *foudroyante*, which suggests the image of being struck by lightning—a trope that combines the petrification of the fascinated subject with the idea of the electric shock, linking mesmerism to the more general eletromagnetotrope of the time.

[628] This physical repulsion is also found in Thomas Mann's description of Cipolla.

[629] Ibid., 94.

[630] Ibid., 94

voice which "penetrates the listener through every pore" prolongs this effect: it naturalizes the phenomenon by evoking the organic dimension of the human skin, while simultaneously extending the sense of hearing to the whole body.[631] This evokes a total absorption of the magnetist's words, on a level which is physiological, perceptible, material, and yet invisible—like the fluid itself. The recipient-listener's permeability and vulnerability to the magnetist's powers is located in the body rather than the rational mind.

As in the theoretical presentation of magnetism, the Balzacian description of the magnetist himself is thus also based on a combination of opposites. It creates ambiguity by reconciling binaries and leave the reader uncertain as to the limits and moral dangers of a power that seems to bridge the gap between the natural and the supernatural. In *Ursule Mirouët,* the magnetist can either help or harm, cure or dominate, and is capable of "mastering the most rebellious wills."[632] Like the character of Vautrin, he inspires a combination of attraction and fear, concentrating both a sacred and a demonic power in a single, material body.

2.1.1.3. The Crumbling of Materialist Skepticism

This dual aspect is what enables magnetism to prepare, on a narrative level, Dr. Minoret's religious conversion, by opening up the material world and the realist genre to the insertion—one might say, the intrusion—of the spiritual, the religious, and the supernatural.

As we have noted, before witnessing the demonstration of somnambulism, Dr. Minoret is initially skeptical.[633] Just as the invitation letter he received from his "converted" colleague Dr. Bouvard "awakened his defiance," when he arrives at the scene, he still "thought he was being humbugged."[634] Referencing Mesmer's famous *baquet* cures, he sarcastically asks: "'What! no more tub?' ... smiling."[635] Significantly, his second question—which is intended as a witty attack against the occultism associated with mesmerism—will constitute the central theme of Poe's short

[631] Ibid., 94.
[632] Ibid.
[633] The demonstration involves the Swedenborgian inducing magnetic sleep in a woman with a technique that recalls the that of Puységur rather than Mesmer. In the text, it is described as a way to free the subject's inner mind or "soul" from ordinary material constraints and allow it to travel, beyond the limits of the visible, the spatial and the physical: "the inmost being, freed from all the fetters which are brought into the exercise of its faculties by visible nature, wanders through the world which we wrongfully call invisible." Ibid., 96.
[634] Ibid., 95-96.
[635] Ibid., 96.

stories, to which we will turn to in the following section: "Has magnetism prevented you from dying?" asked Minoret in a pleasant tone."[636]

Nevertheless, after this initial skepticism, once Minoret meets the Swedenborgian, the lexical field of religious conversion and scientific progress become intertwined, as the stakes are clearly established: "it is a question of changing a contrary belief to ours," of "enlightening an honest scholar."[637] Indeed, the goal of the demonstration is for the magnetized woman to provide verifiable information in the clairvoyant state. In this way, under the "supervision" of the medical authority of both Doctors, the somnambulist woman "will prove to you that there exists a spiritual universe and that the soul does not recognize the laws of the material universe."[638]

Indeed, during the somnambulism demonstration, the doctor is able to verify the ways in which magnetic sleep seems to defy the laws of the material, first by witnessing the induction of somnambulism, then by observing the state of "clairvoyance" displayed by the subject:

> Sight and hearing … exercise themselves more perfectly than in the condition called *waking*, and possibly without the aid of those organs which are the sheaths for those luminous swords called sight and hearing! For a man put into this condition, distances and material objects do not exist, or are traversed by a life that is within us, and for which our body is a reservoir, a necessary prop, an envelope.[639]

Indeed, in this state, physical distance and material obstacles disappear, as the mind is able to travel across vast distances once it has been freed from its somatic envelope: "I will send her to any region that you wish, twenty leagues away or to China; she will tell you what is happening there."[640] The Swedenborgian then invites Minoret to give instructions to the subject himself.[641] Following the magnetist's instructions, the Doctor directs her while holding her hand and "sends" her to Nemours to observe his niece, Ursule.

When the somnambule reveals accurate information about Ursule's activities and burgeoning love story with a young man called Savinien, as well as the precise location of his own savings in his library, the Dr. Minoret undergoes a double reaction. On the one hand, he is "stupefied" and experiences a strong desire to "collect himself and recover from his profound terror"; but on the other, the scientist in him immediately wishes to "test afresh this immense power, to submit it to decisive experiments," to questions "whose solution should remove every

[636] Ibid., 93.
[637] Ibid., 96.
[638] Ibid., 97.
[639] Ibid., 96.
[640] Ibid., 97.
[641] As we saw in Chapter 1, in Puységur's model, *rapport* can be transferred by the operator to another individual.

kind of doubt."[642] Undergoing a mixture of astonishment and curiosity, the Doctor is torn between paralysis and an intellectual desire to test the (im)possible, in-credible, and yet empirically undeniable, phenomenon he has just witnessed. This tension between opposing forces, which pushes the limits of the knowable to their extreme, creates a state bordering on insanity: "'I think I am mad, Bouvard,' replied Minoret on the step of the gateway. 'If the woman has told the truth … *you will be right*.'"[643]

Indeed, once a courier has been sent to Nemours and the clairvoyant's information is confirmed, the Doctor's old belief system and worldview finally crumble: "he went to bed amidst the ruins of all his previous ideas about physiology, nature, and metaphysics."[644] Significantly, this disintegration occurs in the name of a paradoxically extraordinary, yet empirically undeniable observation: "He was bound to yield to evidence."[645]

Cloaked in the language of scientific discourse, the observation of magnetic sleep has paved the way for the Doctor's conversion to Christianity:

> A strong wall crumbled away, so to speak, within him, for he lived supported by two foundations; his indifference to religious matters and his disbelief in magnetism. By proving that the senses … were bounded by some of the attributes of the infinite, magnetism overthrew … Spinoza's powerful argumentation; the infinite and the finite… proved to be one within the other. Matter… had half-divine qualities. … All his science, based upon the assertions of the school of Locke and Condillac, was in ruins. Seeing his hollow idols in pieces, his incredulity necessarily faltered. And so all the advantage in this struggle between Catholic childhood and Voltairean old age, was to be with Ursule. A light was streaming on this dismantled fort, and on these ruins. The voice of prayer was bursting from the bosom of the fragments! … His spirit seemed wavering, he was no longer the same. … The edifice built up in this man by materialism was cracking in every part, it only needed one more shake; and, when his heart was ripe for God, he fell into the heavenly vineyard as the fruits fall.[646]

In this passage, the destruction of the old belief system is conveyed with the architectural image of the crumbling of an internal edifice ("a strong wall crumbled away"; "in ruins"; his "hollow idols in pieces"; "dismantled fort"; "fragments,"; "cracking," and so on). At the foundation of this edifice were two, mutually dependent aspects, pertaining to the worldview produced by the Enlightenment: "his indifference to religious matters and his disbelief in magnetism."[647] Now that the latter has been overcome, the revision of the former automatically follows. This revision reveals a quasi-deductive method implicit in the Balzacian text, in which a ripple or domino effect

[642] Ibid., 102.
[643] Ibid., 103.
[644] Ibid., 106.
[645] Ibid., 111.
[646] Ibid., 111-113.
[647] Ibid., 111.

leads from the acknowledgment of the magnetic "fact," to a complete and profound revision of the relations between the material and the spiritual (and, as stated in this passage, between finitude and the infinite). The refutation of materialism that stems from the acceptance of magnetism necessarily, almost logically, opens up the Doctor's mind to the religious.[648] In a quasi-reversal of the Cartesian reconstruction of the world after the establishment of the single apodictic truth, here, a single but unquestionable experience of Mesmerism leads to a total and general overturning of Minoret's worldview.

Furthermore, in this passage, the lexical field of material ruins further emphasizes the power of the immaterial to overturn philosophical materialism. With the image of the crumbling edifice, the doctor's beliefs are described as physical objects (walls, pieces, etc.) which are vulnerable to the destructive yet immaterial power of the spiritual: the imponderable and invisible has the ability to act on, modify and destroy the material. From this empty, hollow space created by the destruction of atheist materialism, religious faith can then emerge. As it fills up the hole, the text switches from inanimate and architectural images to organic evocations of life and plenitude in order to describe the "warmth" of faith: "a light was streaming," "the voice of prayer was bursting," "the bosom," and so on.[649] Once more, with a subtle juxtaposition of binaries—from empty to full, dark to light, cold to warm, inanimate to animated—the text gradually injects life back into the ruins, in a motion reminiscent of the circulation of the fluid itself.

The final "wavering" then corresponds to the last resistance of the cracked edifice of materialism, that "only needed one more shake."[650] Significantly, this "shake" comes from the "heart"—as opposed to the intellect, or Pascal's Reason—and allows the paragraph to culminate in the Edenic image of fruition: "ripe for God ... into the heavenly vineyard."[651] The image of the fruit falling is the mirror-opposite of the Biblical Fall, and suggests instead proper maturation, ripening, completion, and harvesting, as well as a strong passivity on the part of the subject, who seems almost powerless in this process of yielding. Indeed, the force at play is far greater than the

[648] Significantly, his colleague Dr. Bouvard employed a similar pattern of thinking in an earlier passage: "If you acknowledge that this woman has the faculty of reducing or of traversing space, if you admit … that she hears and sees all that is being said and done at Nemours, then you must admit *all the other magnetic effects,* which to an unbeliever are as incredible as these are." Ibid., 104, emphasis added.
[649] Ibid., 112.
[650] Ibid., 113.
[651] Ibid.

individual's will or powers of ratiocination, suggesting an ineluctable necessity which echoes and subverts the initial idea of "yielding to evidence" from the opening of the paragraph.

Therefore, in *Ursule Mirouët,* the irresistible power of magnetism causes one form of (atheist, materialist) "faith" to yield to another (spiritualist). A new individual then emerges from the symbolic death of the old belief system: "he was no longer the same."[652] Simultaneously, by bridging the gap between opposing philosophical views and "planes" of existence, magnetism serves as a gateway, a passage—and a naturalization—from materialism to spiritualism.

Once a crack appears, a torrential wave of spirituality overcomes and permeates the soul of the old Doctor in the foreground, while in the background the text simultaneously thematizes and performs, with the image of a spiritual flood, the fluidic circulation which is central to the conception of magnetism of the time. As in other works by Balzac which tackle the question of the opposition between materialism and spiritualism*,* while scientific and medical discourse are "forced" to choose between either paradigm, the literary text is able to represent and incorporate both, as well as the conflicting and complex network of relations that polarize them.

2.1.1.4. Magnetism and Spiritualism

In the second half of *Ursule Mirouët,* magnetism is then increasingly associated with the explicit emergence of the supernatural, whose presence is gradually strengthened until the novel seems to have shifted into the realm of the fantastic, rather than realism. Indeed, by the end of the text—like Swedenborg—Ursule has acquired several somnambulistic powers, such as the ability to communicate with the dead. In a series of dream apparitions, she receives instructions from her deceased uncle Minoret, that resolve the plot and bring the story to a close, by settling the inheritance drama and reestablishing justice.[653]

Like magnetism, these spectral apparitions of Dr. Minoret receive a double treatment in the text. One the one hand, they are framed as religious interventions.[654] On the other hand, they are naturalized in the discourse of the Abbé Chaperon, a friend of Dr. Minoret's. These seemingly

[652] Ibid.
[653] "She narrated her three dreams and their most trifling details, insisting upon the absolute truth of the facts, the facility of her movements, and the somnambulism of an inner self, which, she said, moved about under the spirit's guidance with the greatest ease." Ibid.
[654] This is prepared early on in the text, in mentions of Christ's apparitions: "But Jesus appeared to His Apostles after His death," rejoined the curé. "The church must have faith in our Saviour's apparitions." Balzac, 113.

contradictory propositions are united in the Abbé's contention that "all that God does is natural."[655] In such passages, the fantastic, the supernatural, and the miraculous are grouped together and subsumed under the category of the natural, all pertaining to the realm of Creation. Indeed, when Ursule asks him what to make of her uncle's strange nocturnal visitations, the priest provides a rational explanation which unites the power of ideas (of the "spiritual") and the existence of spirits in a common realm of the natural:

> By what means can these strange apparitions take place?" said Ursule. "What did my godfather think of it?"— "Your godfather, my child, went by hypothesis. He had admitted the existence of a spiritual world, a world of ideas. If ideas are a production peculiar to man, if they subsist upon a life which is their own, they might have shapes that are imperceptible to our outward senses, but perceptible to our inward senses when they are in certain conditions. And so your godfather's ideas may envelop you, and perhaps you have invested them with his semblance.[656]

According to the Abbé, ghosts are but the imperceptible yet real manifestation of ideas, which can then be transformed into action and modify the material world: "Then, if Minoret has committed these acts, they resolve themselves into ideas; for all action is the result of several ideas. Now, if ideas move in the spiritual world your spirit must have perceived them by penetrating into it."[657] To substantiate this argument about the material power of the immaterial, the priest uses the classical example of memory—rather than of the wind, as in Maupassant—and a rarer, olfactory example: "These phenomena are not more extraordinary than those of memory, and those of memory are as surprising and unaccountable as those of the perfume of plants, which may be the ideas of the plant."[658] The smell of plants, the power of memory, and Ursule's terrifying nocturnal apparitions can all be conceptualized in terms of the "real" effects of—immaterial—"ideas." In these analogies, the realm of the comprehensible or "explainable" is expanded beyond the boundaries of material reality, to the point where smells, ideas, and ghosts coexist (and thoughts, sap, and perfume circulate like the imponderable fluid) in a delicate balance which makes the spiritual *real* without necessarily having to make it *material.*[659] In this sense, in the Balzacian text, spiritualism refers neither to superstition nor ignorance, but rather to an increase in knowledge, an extension of the mind's capacities, and a refinement in perception—from the "gross" perceptions

[655] Ibid., 313.
[656] Ibid., 309.
[657] Ibid., 310.
[658] Ibid.
[659] Indeed, as she tries to reconcile the perceptual fact of "hear[ing] a corpse speak, to see it walking and acting" with the Abbé's reassuring discourse, Ursule frames his explanation in terms of "enlarging the world." Ibid., 310.

of the physical organs to the more "subtle" perception of the "inner senses." In this way, the spiritualist's world is "larger" than the materialist's.

As the fictional universe is extended beyond the materialist-spiritualist opposition and realist-fantastic division, the text simultaneously underlines its own gesture of philosophical inclusion, its ability to encompass and maintain balance between the naturalist explanation and spiritualism, between the rational and the religious, between the scientific and the occult.

Therefore, for Balzac, while magnetism serves mostly to criticize materialist monism, it also preserves science's ability to reconcile with spiritualism. As we shall see in the next section, for Poe, this philosophical "extension" is used to challenge scientific knowledge in a more extreme way, by pushing the question of the limits of the material to its maximal literality and thereby, to its breaking point.

2.1.2. Magnetism as Suspension: Poe's Three Mesmeric Tales

As noted in the previous section, Dr. Minoret jokingly asked if magnetism, in its ability to disrupt the relations between mind and matter, could prevent death.[660] In spiritualist circles, this question also corresponded to the fantasy and fascination for a discipline deemed capable of pushing back the boundaries of human finitude and mortality.[661] In this section, we will examine Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-1849) Gothic treatment of mesmerism, which also produces a "scientifically oriented" and spiritualist refutation of materialist monism. Like Balzac, Poe uses Mesmerism to experiment with the aesthetic, narrative and philosophical possibilities that it offers, as a union of seemingly incompatible and contradictory elements. In Poe's texts, however, the subversive power of magnetism is radicalized and used to imagine the experience of a state of literal *suspension* between life and death. While in *Reflections on War and Death,* Freud famously writes that "we cannot imagine our own death," as I will show, Poe's literary treatment of

[660] Balzac, *Ursule Mirouët,* 93.
[661] This fantasy of a discipline capable of pushing back against the physical limitations and ephemeral existence of the human body can also be found at the end of *Madame Bovary,* when Charles thinks of magnetism as a last hope to prevent Emma's death: "He recalled stories of catalepsy, the marvels of magnetism, and he said to himself that by willing it with all his force he might perhaps succeed in reviving her." Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, ed. M. Cohen, trans, E. Marx Aveling (New York and London: Norton and Company, 2005), 261.

magnetism involves precisely such an attempt, which aims to produce a first-person account of this seemingly irrepresentable experience.[662]

In the United States, mid-century, spiritualist interest in mesmerism and its potential to challenge the presuppositions of orthodox medical was also strong, like in France and Great Britain.[663] As we shall see, in the three short stories examined in this section, Poe both reflected the interest of his day and poetically reimagined what was "by all odds the most fascinating of the new 'sciences'."[664] Although in the medical field in the 1840s, it had already begun to take on the psychological connotations associated with hypnotism, Poe's use of the term "mesmerism" mostly overlaps with the term "magnetism."[665]

In "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" (published in *Godey's in* April 1844), "Mesmeric Revelation" (published in the *Columbian Magazine* in August 1844), and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (published in the *American Review in* December 1845), Poe restricts his conceptualization of the material-spiritual divide to the question of the life-death relations and explores, through the theme of mesmerism, various points of transition between both of these states. By representing magnetic sleep as a state of *interim* which can temporally, corporeally, and intellectually prolong—thereby making it available in the first person—the state of the individual *in articulo moris,* Poe's tales both capture and radicalize "something of the mesmeric effect in general"—that is, the "hiatus" it creates in conscious volition.[666]

In this section, we will examine the stories in chronological order, to underline the gradual progression with which a conscious, *lucid* exploration of the non-conscious is thematized, culminating in the representation of an impossible state of living-death.

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[662] "We cannot, indeed, imagine our own death; whenever we try to do so we find that we survive ourselves as spectators. The school of psychoanalysis could thus assert that at bottom no one believes in his own death, which amounts to saying: in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his immortality." Freud, "Our Attitude Towards Death," in *Reflections on War and Death,* trans. A. A. Brill and Alfred Kuttner (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1918), 41.

[663] As Sidney Lind notes, Deleuze's *Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism* was translated and published in the United States in 1837. In 1841, a committee composed of doctors, clergy men and prominent citizens was also put together in Boston to witness a series of experiments performed by Dr. Robert H. Collyer, a "rabid supporter of animal magnetism," and in June 1842, the journal *Magnet,* which declared itself as "devoted to the Investigation of Human Physiology" was established. Sidney E. Lind, "Poe and Mesmerism." *PMLA* 62, no. 4 (December 1947): 1077.

[664] Lind, "Poe and mesmerism," 1077.

[665] As Doris Falk notes, the proximity between the publication dates of Braid's work (1842-43) and of Poe's mesmeric tales (1844-5) "makes it unlikely that Poe could have read Braid at this time." See Doris V. Falk, "Poe and the Power of Animal Magnetism." *PMLA* 84 (1969): 536.

[666] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 58.

2.1.2.1. "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains": Metempsychosis of Mesmerism

Poe's "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" recounts the story of Augustus Bedloe, who suddenly disappears, then mysteriously reappears, after an extraordinary experience of "soul travel," which leaves open the question of its potentially delusional, or on the contrary, supernatural, nature. Set in the 1840s, the story represents events occurring in 1827, when Mesmerism was still deemed controversial. According to the narrative discourse, this twenty-year long gap allows the extraordinary events of the past to be established with the seriousness of a new, "scientifically informed," perspective: "It is only now, in the year 1845, when similar miracles are witnessed daily by thousands, that I dare venture to record this apparent impossibility as a matter of serious fact."[667] In Poe's text, the alternation between the possibility of natural and supernatural explanations contributes to the fantastic genre of the text, in which mesmerism strengthens the undecidability between both explanations. Poe's text has thus been described as "an exceedingly well contrived mixture of the real and unreal, of hypnotism and metempsychosis."[668]

Bedloe's character fits mid-century conceptions of the "susceptible" magnetic subject. Described as "peculiar" in *all* aspects,[669] he combines both innate and acquired factors which contribute to his susceptibility to magnetism: as a morphine addict with a "singularly vigorous and creative" imagination, he has become greatly diminished by "a long series of neuralgic attacks," cured by the magnetic remedies of his physician, Dr. Templeton.[670]

Descriptions of Bedloe's gaze focus on its "abnormal" ability to reconcile opposing aspects, alternating between excessive vitality and luminosity on the one hand, and an overwhelmingly morbid dullness on the other:

> His eyes were abnormally large, and round like those of a cat. The pupils, too, upon any accession or diminution of light, underwent contraction or dilation, just such as is observed in the feline tribe. In moments of excitement the orbs grew bright to a degree almost inconceivable; seeming to emit luminous rays, not of a reflected but of an intrinsic lustre, as does a candle or the sun; yet their ordinary condition was so totally vapid, filmy, and dull as to convey the idea of the eyes of a long-interred corpse.[671]

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[667] Edgar Allam Poe, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains." 1844. In *Mystery Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: AL Burt Company, 1907), 217. As in Balzac, the serious dimension of "fact" is pitted against the extraordinary dimension of the miraculous.
[668] Lind, "Poe and Mesmerism," 1079.
[669] Poe, "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," 214.
[670] Poe, Ibid., 215.
[671] Poe, Ibid., 215.

Confirming the central role of the gaze in representations of hypnosis, Poe's description also anticipates, in the "natural" predispositions of the magnetic subject, his ulterior state of *suspension*, which will be artificially created by the operator.

Mesmerism is introduced in the text in virtue of its curative properties, following the *topos* of the mid-century. Templeton having already induced magnetic sleep in Bedloe on several occasions, both men are said to share "a very distinct and strongly marked rapport, or magnetic relation."[672] Nevertheless, by presenting the events from the perspective of an exterior narrator, the text subtly undermines the position of the established medical discourse, and introduces uncertainty regarding the therapeutic efficacy of Templeton's practice. Indeed, the text creates distance between the doctor's perspective on the one hand, and Bedloe's and the narrator's on the other,[673] as the narrative voice casts skeptical doubt on the efficacy of Templeton's cures ("from whose attention … he either received, or fancied that he received, great benefit"), setting up an atmosphere of interpretative undecidability from the start.[674] In this way, the narrative function of magnetism as sole means of interpreting the event about to be narrated is undermined.

In Bedloe's story, the realist aesthetic then undergoes a series of "assaults" by the supernatural and the "reality" of the extraordinary event is put to the test hyperbolic doubt in a Cartesian nightmare of sorts. The shift from the ordinary walk in the hills to the extraordinary—uninterpretable—event is marked by a disruption of the unusual, on both auditory and visual levels, into Bedloe's attention field.

First, the character's familiar universe is suddenly invaded by the exotic, the uncanny, and the unfamiliar: "Very suddenly my attention was arrested by the loud beating of a drum … a dusky-visaged and half-naked man rushed past me with a shriek … there darted … a hyena."[675] This unusual sight then creates a dissociation, prompting the hypothesis that Bedloe is dreaming: "The sight of this monster rather relieved than heightened my terrors—for I now made sure that I

[672] As the narrator notes, they have reached a point where "the will of the patient succumbed rapidly to that of the physician, so that, when I first became acquainted with the two, sleep was brought about almost instantaneously by the mere volition of the operator, even when the invalid was unaware of his presence." Ibid., 216. Like Balzac, Poe seems to lean more towards Puységur's model, in which one will acts upon another, rather than describe the pure circulation of a material fluid.
[673] Indeed, the pupil initially seems more skeptical than the doctor, who is described in Balzacian fashion as having been "converted" to Mesmerism in Paris, but who "like all enthusiasts," has "struggled hard to make a thorough convert of his pupil." Ibid., 216.
[674] Ibid., 215.
[675] Ibid., 219.

dreamed, and endeavored to arouse myself to waking consciousness."[676] Upon the sight of a palm tree, however, the dream hypothesis vanishes and is replaced and reinforced, transformed into the hallucination—or waking dream—hypothesis: "I saw—I felt that I had perfect command of my senses—and these senses now brought to my soul a world of novel and singular sensation."[677] The impression of reality emanating from sensory perception brings the narrator's "dream" into the more tangible, sensory, domain of hypnotic experience, as if immersed in a hallucinatory yet perceptible world, which is manifested in the shift between the visual ("I saw") to the kinesthetic ("I felt").

The text then establishes that Bedloe has been transported to the city of Benares, in India, where the population seems to in a state of revolt. Here, the event reaches its paroxysm: the character is hit, and suddenly feels himself slipping away from the realm of the living: "I struggled—I gasped—I died."[678] Although the event remains narrated *as* past, with its three moments distinct from one another—unlike the impossible utterance of M. Valdemar, "I am dead," in which death is experienced in the present mode—here, the text's use of punctuation and dashes, the repetition of the pronoun "I" and the ternary rhythm and sentence structure, bring the chronological order of the three moments as close as possible to one. Like Valdemar's, Bedloe's utterance is an impossible one, provided that one is judging from within a paradigm that excludes metempsychosis or past life regression: either the character has died, and is no longer able to make utterances, or he has survived, and therefore his utterance is false.

However, from a spiritualist paradigm, Bedloe's utterance might count as true. Indeed, the "moment" of death is described as a dissolution of the material followed by a split between the body and soul, where the character is aware of his corporeal death and able to perceive his body from above.[679] Following this dissociation, the metaphor of electricity is mobilized, as the soul is "jolted" back into the body, creating a return to the ordinary: "I again experienced a shock as of a galvanic battery, the sense of weight, of volition, of substance, returned. I became my original self, and bent my steps eagerly homeward."[680] Although one might be tempted to dismiss the experience as a dream, its vividness prevents the Bedloe from doing so: "the past had not lost the vividness of

[676] Ibid.
[677] Ibid.
[678] Ibid., 223.
[679] "'For many minutes,' continued the latter, 'my sole sentiment—my sole feeling—was that of darkness and nonentity, with the consciousness of death." Ibid., 223.
[680] Ibid., 224.

the real—and not now, even for an instant, can I compel my understanding to regard it as a dream."[681]

Despite its being previously framed as scientifically legitimate, with this extraordinary event, Mesmerism then seems to be placed on the side of the occult.[682] Indeed, detaining the authoritative discourse in the story, Dr. Templeton is the one to defend the supernatural—rather than the naturalizing—hypothesis, by subscribing to the theory of metempsychosis. The magnetist thus explicitly defends the hypothesis of the reality of Bedloe's soul-traveling, and subsumes it under the category of scientific progress, blurring the boundaries between medical science and psychical research: "Let us suppose only, that the soul of the man of to-day is upon the verge of some stupendous psychal [*sic*] discoveries."[683] At the end of the story, when he hands Bedloe a 1780 watercolor portrait of Mr. Oldeb, (a British officer who died in the "insurrection of Cheyte Sing, which took place in 1780") and Bedloe's death is uncannily announced a week later in the paper—with the "e" missing, making it "Oldeb conversed"—the medical authority serves to give credence and reinforce the supernatural interpretation.[684] By the end of the story, the narrative perspective thus seems to lean more heavily towards the paradigm in which soul-travel and metempsychosis are possible, as "facts." The competing, hallucination-dream hypothesis, according to which the illusory is experienced as real but remains an illusion nonetheless, seems to have been discarded.

As Sidney Lind had insightfully argued, however, on the contrary, the event narrated by Bedloe can be interpreted as the full product of mesmerism, that is, as an induced hallucination, rather than a supernatural event. Metempsychosis, in this sense, would simply be Dr. Templeton's belief, a mere element of his characterization, rather than the general framework of the narrative. Indeed, for Lind, the story was clearly "intended by Poe to be a study in hypnosis, with the theme of metempsychosis subordinated to one character, Dr. Templeton. There is nothing whatever of the supernatural in it."[685] In this sense, Templeton suffers from a "lack of awareness throughout the tale that metempsychotic implications exist only in his mind."[686] According to this reading, as

[681] Ibid.
[682] This is strengthened by the fact that the doctor is able to interject and predict Bedloe's sentences as he tells his tale, which creates a sense of astonishment in the characters present.
[683] Ibid., 224.
[684] Ibid., 225-6.
[685] Lind, "Poe and Mesmerism," 1085.
[686] Ibid., 1081.

in Balzac, the status of mesmerism remains ambiguous, opening the text up to the intrusions of the occult, yet serving as a "scientific explanation" to naturalize the supernatural.

Regardless of the role granted to the supernatural in the tale, in this story, mesmerism is what makes "possible" an early, first person experience of the *suspension* later developed in "The facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." The fascination and function of mesmerism, therefore, seems to be to stretch the limits of rational discourse, to extend the boundaries of the material and of human finitude to their limits. Mesmerism allows Poe to literalize and give concrete, fictional, representation to what would otherwise remain a mere, abstract, thought experiment. In this sense, it plays a metaphysical, rather than merely fantastic, role.

2.1.2.2. "Mesmeric Revelation": Transcending the Material

In "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844), Poe also establishes a framework of "mesmeric experimentation" as the basis for his "venture into metaphysical speculation."[687] Drawing heavily on Townshends' 1840 *Facts in Mesmerism*[688]—a defense of Mesmerism which popularized it in England at the time—Poe's story begins by establishing the "rationale" of mesmerism and the existence of mesmeric sleep as a "fact" that no longer needs to be proven.

The short story opens with a theoretical presentation of mesmerism not unlike Balzac's in *Ursule Mirouët.* Although the narrator claims he will enumerate "the laws of mesmerism in its general features," it quickly becomes apparent that his true objects of fascination are the similarities between the state of mesmeric sleep and death.[689] Describing magnetism as an "abnormal condition, of which the phenomena resemble very closely those of death," he is on the contrary quite selective in the "laws" he examines.[690]

Rather than demonstrate the existence of mesmerism, however, the narrator-operator proposes to restitute a dialogue with one of his subjects, Mr. Vankirk, a "sleep-walker" with whom he has experimented with mesmeric sleep multiple times.[691] Vankirk, who has been "laboring

[687] Ibid., 1087; Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation." In *Tales.* Second Edition (London: Wiley & Putnam, 1846).
[688] Chauncy Hare Townshend, *Facts in Mesmerism, With Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1842).
[689] Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," 47.
[690] Ibid., 47. It is probable that here Poe has mainly the cataleptic state in mind, for as stated in Chapter 1, a wide array of hypnotic experiences reveal that subjects can freely move, speak, laugh and display numerous signs of 'vitality' rather than death, during magnetic sleep.
[691] Ibid., 49.

under constant phthisis," has recently suffered from an asthma attack and suffers from "acute pain in the region of the heart." Rather than to soothe his "bodily ailment," however, he has called the narrator to his bedside because of "phychal impressions" which give him anxiety.[692] Vankirk then asks the narrator to conduct an "experiment" in which, after the induction of mesmeric sleep, he will be asked a series of questions about the relations between the somatic and the spiritual. During this anti-rationalist dialogue, the possibility of man's immortality is discussed in relation to mesmeric sleep, launching a metaphysical reflection on the boundaries between the material and the spiritual as the narrative transforms into a dialogue on cosmogony, the nature of matter and God.

The form of the text is reminiscent of a pastiche of a Platonic dialogue, in which Poe's clairvoyant "differs from most" as "he expresses himself in the prosaic language of science or philosophy, presenting an organized argument."[693] Seo-Young Chu, for instance, contends that the form of Poe's story may be described as "hypnotic ratiocination," where interlocutors in different states of consciousness—"asleep and awake, passive and active, second-person and first-person"—interact.[694] The function of this ratiocination is to defend the position according to which God and thoughts are made up of "unparticled matter" in motion, a matter rarer and finer than ether.[695] Mesmerism, according to the text's spiritualist description, is a means to access "direct" and "refined" forms of perception, where the powers of the mind can transcend physical, spatial and material obstacles and the limitations usually imposed by the physical senses: "the person so impressed employs only with effort, and then feebly, the external organs of sense, yet perceives, with keenly refined perception, and through channels supposed unknown, matters beyond the scope of the physical organs."[696] In this sense, it comes as close as possible to accessing this

[692] Ibid., 48.
[693] Falk, "Poe and the Power of Animal Magnetism," 544.
[694] Seo-Young Chu, "Hypnotic Ratiocination," *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 5.
[695] Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," 50. This spiritualist idea directly fits Poe's conception of Mesmerism, which is the closest that man can get to this "unparticled matter" in the material realm. Indeed, as Doris Falk explains, is "a pervasive organizing principle, accounting for the cohesion of the molecules of the body and the nervous system, as it does for that of the particles of matter and of the units of the cosmos," which recalls many of the aspects of animal magnetism. See Falk, "Poe and the Power of Animal Magnetism," 538.
[696] Indeed, it is described as a state of "profound self-cognizance," a clairvoyant state in which the mesmeric "sleep-walker" displays "extensive knowledge … upon all points relating to the mesmeric condition itself." Although this state of intense absorption can give the impression of the subject is "deaf"—and thus dead—to exterior stimuli, the mention of his intellectual faculties being "wonderfully exalted and invigorated" suggests on the contrary that magnetic sleep can enhance potential rather than diminish it, and thus seems incompatible with the state of "death. Ibid., 47; 49.

"unparticled matter" which, "through what we consider its immateriality, eludes the organic."[697] In this way, it opens up the possibility of providing experiential "proof" of the immortality of the soul.

Indeed, unlike what Descartes believed, rather than be demonstrated rationally, in Poe's tale the immortality of the soul must be established through experience: "if man is to be intellectually convinced of his own immortality, he will never be so convinced by the mere abstractions."[698] As Vankirk explains, there is a gap between his own intellectual "denial" of the immortality of the soul and his "feeling," the "half-sentiment" that his soul has of its own existence.[699] This notion of "feeling" allows the text to set up the possibility of an intuitive "truth" accessible via mesmeric sleep, by detaching oneself from the gross perceptions of the material body. As in Balzac, the experience of Mesmerism thus opens the door to spiritualism in the mind of the rational skeptic, "all attempts at logical inquiry" having resulted "in leaving me more sceptical than before."[700]

After blurring the material and the spiritual, the text can then draw the parallel between mesmeric trance and death: "the mesmeric condition is so near death as to content me."[701] Rather than merely end physical existence, mesmeric sleep allows to transcend it, by providing access to a more subtle, finer, plane of existence, beyond the limitations of ordinary sense perception: "When I say that it resembles death, I mean that it resembles the ultimate life; for when I am entranced the senses of my rudimental life are in abeyance and I perceive external things directly, without organs, through a medium which I shall employ in the ultimate, unorganized life."[702]

Significantly, the affirmation of the triumph of the immaterial causes the sudden interruption of the narrative—announcing the sudden death of the speaker—bringing the story to a close: "As the sleep-waker [*sic*] pronounced these latter words, in a feeble tone, I observed on his countenance a singular expression, which somewhat alarmed me, and induced me to awake him at once. No sooner had I done this than, with a bright smile irradiating all his features, he fell

[697] Ibid., 56.
[698] Ibid, 48.
[699] Ibid.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid., 50.
[702] Spirit travel and immortality are then made possible by the soul's "volition": "In all, the organs vary with the features of the place tenanted. At death, or metamorphosis, these creatures, enjoying the ultimate life -immortality- and cognizant of all secrets but the one, act all things and pass every where by mere volition." Ibid., 54; 55.

back upon his pillow and expired."[703] With this sudden expiration, three aspects of materiality—the concept of matter, Vankirk's body and of the body of the text itself—simultaneously dissolve, in an ending that constitutes both a closing and opening up to the unknown, beyond the known.[704]

In "Mesmeric Revelation," mesmerism thus functions as a means to *suspend* the state between life and death and allow the text to pose the question of what lies beyond human mortality and materiality. Through the fictionalization of a thought experiment, Mesmerism is thus a means to conduct "serious" philosophical inquiry beyond the opposition between rationalism and obscurantism, "beyond the opposition between logic and feeling."[705] In this sense, it is also a way to renegotiate the vocabulary and standards for philosophical inquiry. Indeed, it provides a means of redefining terms like "proof," and as Chu argues, allows to "reimagine logical and poetic rigor" in an anti-rationalistic, yet discursively refined manner.[706] In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," this philosophical investigation will be radicalized and, rather than merely centering on the question of death as *after-life,* will portray Mesmeric sleep a literal *suspension* between life and death, which paradoxically simultaneously negates both.

2.1.2.3. "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar": Mesmerism as Suspension

Nowhere has "the horrific face of mesmeric medicine" been more dramatically portrayed than in Poe's third "macabre" tale, which according to Pick, "many took to be an authentic report."[707] Indeed, rather than a purely fictional invention, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" has been described as the "expansion, in detail, if not beyond, then at least to the limits of horror" of an actual case reported by Townshend in *Facts of Mesmerism*.[708] As Lind observes, with the

[703] Ibid., 57.
[704] This openness is emphasized by the interrogative form and the final question mark, which end the text on a note of uncertainty, marking the impossibility of ending the narrative on the affirmative or declarative mode: "his corpse had all the stern rigidity of stone. His brow was of the coldness of ice. … Had the sleep-waker … been addressing me from out the regions of the shadows?" Ibid., 57.
[705] Chu, "Hypnotic Ratiocination," 5.
[706] Ibid., 5.
[707] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 57; Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." 1845. In *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 1 (April 1926): 92-96.
[708] Lind, 1091. Indeed, the "Notice" to the 1844 London edition of his book, Townshend reports: "I have watched the effects of mesmeric treatment upon a suffering friend, who was dying of that most fearful disorder—Lumbar Abscess. Unfortunately, through various hindrances, Mesmerism was not resorted to till late in the progress of the disease, so that, of course, that it should effect a cure was out of the question. ... I have no hesitation in saying, that, under God, the life of my friend, R. T. was prolonged, at least, two months by the action of Mesmerism." Townshend, *Facts of Mesmerism*, xvi.

invocation of the concept of "facts" in its very title, Poe's tale thus strives to "resembl[e] its source" by imitating the form of "a logical, pseudo-medical case-study, once the impossible premise has been granted."[709] As we shall see, however, Poe's poetic reimagination of mesmerism—as an impossible state of suspension between life and death—has little to do with the actual medical cases of the magnetists described in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the "facts" mentioned in Poe title are presented without the interpretive keys that would enable their understanding, preserving the full ambiguous complexity of magnetism as a poetic-philosophical—rather than purely medical—object.[710] In this sense, the "suspension" involved in Poe's representation of Mesmeric sleep will be epistemological—between knowledge and uncertainty—just as much as it is literal—between life and death.

Mesmerism as Suspension

In fact, the lexical field in the opening paragraphs of Poe's tale is that of the exceptional or supernatural rather than the "factual." In the first three lines for example, one encounters the terms "wonder," "extraordinary," and "miracle," before the narrative voice switches to a more suspicious mode and a vocabulary of "investigation," "misrepresentations," "disbelief." [711] This contrast underlines the two available, opposing attitudes towards magnetism, even before the mention of the subject is explicitly introduced: wonder at the extraordinary, and skeptical disbelief.

The topic of the story is then presented by the narrator as an innovative experiment serving to correct an "omission" in the general experimental history of Mesmerism: "no person had as yet been mesmerized *in articulo mortis.*"[712] The goal of the investigation is to induce mesmeric sleep in order to *suspend* the advent of bodily death, establishing "to what extent, or for how long a period, the encroachments of Death might be arrested by the process."[713] Like Bedloe, M. Valdemar—who also suffers from phthisis—is described as predisposed towards being susceptible

[709] Lind, 1091.
[710] The "correct" interpretation is announced as inaccessible as such from the start, leaving the interpretative gap open for the reader to fill as the narration unfolds: "It is now rendered necessary that I give the facts—as far as I comprehend them myself." Poe, 93.
[711] Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." 93.
[712] Ibid., 93.
[713] Ibid.,93. Significantly, in Poe's tale, the first-person narrator is not introduced. His occupation remains unknown and his characterization is reduced to the "curiosity" which leads him to plan on carrying out the experiment, and search for a "subject" in order to conduct his "test." In this sense, the narrative voice is juxtaposed with this sense of curiosity regarding the boundaries of the rational, the knowable and the natural, cloaked in the language of scientific inquiry

to magnetism.[714] As in the previous tales, both men have previously experiments together with magnetic sleep, albeit with disappointing results in terms of clairvoyance and absolute—"positive"—control of the will. Paradoxically, this initial hindrance is the condition of the unfolding of the story: as Mr. Valdemar knows that his death is imminent, he disposed to selflessly experiment during the little time remaining available for scientific inquiry.[715]

Poe's description of Valdemar at death's door is particularly striking, juxtaposing personal elements ("his face") and impersonal descriptions ("the skin"), drawing on medical terminology and fragmenting the already decomposing body into discrete parts, culminating in the mention of the "ossification" of the left lung.[716] There is a sharp contrast however between corporeal dissolution and mental vitality which emphasizes the possibilities opened up by magnetic sleep: despite his physical frailty, Valdemar retains his "mental power," speaks "with distinctness" and even occupies himself by "penciling memoranda" in a pocket-book.[717] The fantasy of suspension involved in descriptions of mesmeric sleep, involving a *delay* of bodily degradation, is operative in the description of a subject whose mental capacities remain untouched and are allowed to explore both internal and external worlds once they are freed from the "laws" of pathology and materiality.

Medical and Magnetic Authority

Poe's tale dramatizes the dynamics of authority and authenticity brought to the fore by the phenomenon of magnetism. As in the other stories, here, the authority of medical discourse initially seems to serve as a guarantee of the narrative events. For instance, the narrative itself claims to be

[714] Indeed, he is "particularly noticeable for the extreme spareness of his person" and "his temperament was markedly nervous Poe." As in the previous tales, the characters have previously experiments together with magnetism, albeit with disappointing results when it comes to clairvoyance and absolute—"positive"—control of the will. In other words, early on, the text underlines the gap between the fascination for the potential of magnetism and its actual results. Rather than dismiss mesmeric technique altogether, the narrator attributes the failure to the "disordered state" of Valdemar's health, who also suffers from phthisis. Ibid., 93.

[715] "it was his custom to speak… calmly of his approaching dissolution, as of a matter neither to be avoided nor regretted." Ibid., 93. Even at this early stage, the temporal structure of the narrative is disrupted by magnetism. Although Valdemar sent the narrator a note indicating that he was expected to die in less than a day, the latter indicates that seven months have passed since he received it. Consequently, either the diagnosis given by Valdemar's doctors ("D— and F—") was incorrect, or another factor disrupted the predictable course of disease and death. At this stage of the narrative, both options remain available in the text.

[716] "His face wore a leaden hue; the eyes were utterly lusterless; and the emaciation was so extreme that the skin had been broken through by the cheek-bones. His expectoration was excessive. The pulse was barely perceptible." Ibid., 93.

[717] Ibid., 94.

reconstituted—"either copied or condensed verbatim"—from the memoranda of Mr. L—the medical student—establishing both the "veracity" and accuracy of the details of the story.[718] The regular insertion of temporal annotations ("five minutes before eleven"; "it wanted about five minutes of eight") mimics the rigor of scientific methodology and observation.[719] In this way, as Brian Diemert notes, the text creates "the illusion that we are reading a scientific account wherein language is made transparent, so as not to interfere in the presentation of 'the facts in the case'."[720]

Nevertheless, while the narrative discourse establishes this—illusory—ideal of a transparent notation, of a pure transposition from the factual to the textual, the text itself actively works to gradually undermined it as the narrative unfolds. In this sense, the narrator "claims for himself an authority, supported by his position as a scientist" which he cannot sustain "because Poe's ironic perspective consistently undermines him."[721] This underlying undecidability it as the heart of the literary treatment of the magnetic object.

Once the state of magnetic sleep has been induced, a blurring occurs, where the "unequivocal signs of the mesmeric influence" become practically indistinguishable from those of imminent death.[722] The similarities between a comatic state, somnambulism and expiration are emphasized, at the expense of their differences.[723] As we saw in Chapter 1, Valdemar's transfixed gaze, his cataleptic eyelids and limbs, are classic signs of the hypnotic state—ones that in the 1880s, the Salpêtrière school would call its 'somnambulistic' and 'cataleptic' phases, and the Nancy school would describe as the mere products of suggestion. Here, however, they become interchangeable with the physiological signs of imminent death of the subject. Only the medical

[718]"He would take notes of all that occurred, and it is from his memoranda that what I now have to relate is, for the most part, either condensed or copied verbatim." Ibid., 94.
[719] Ibid., 94.
[720] Brian Diemert, "Recomposing 'Valdemar': Graham Greene Reweaves a Tale by Poe," *Style* 27, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 433.
[721] Ibid., 428.
[722] Poe, 94. Although it introduced the new term of "trance" in addition to that of "sleep," like Balzac's, Poe's description of the mesmeric induction still works with the magnetic, rather than the hypnotic, model. Describing the use of magnetic "passes" and "lateral stroke[s]," the text also introduces the possessive "my powers," which suggests that the participation of the subject is not a central factor in the induction of mesmeric sleep. As Valdemar's pulse becomes imperceptible and his breathing has slowed down considerably, the narrator then exchanges "the lateral passes for downward ones" and directs his gaze "entirely into the right eye of the sufferer" for reasons that remain unspecified in the text—precisely the type of material which will be parodied by the Flaubertian narrator. The parallel between the states of
[723] For instance: "that expression of uneasy inward examination which is never seen except in cases of sleep-waking, and which it is quite impossible to mistake"; the eyelids "quiver, as in incipient sleep"; the "stiffening" of the limbs Ibid., 94.

authority is able to distinguish both states, and in this way, guarantee the presence of a state of a mesmeric trance.[724]

After several hours, the body of Valdemar has become a quasi-inanimate object, seemingly devoid of all signs of life: "the limbs were as rigid and as cold as marble."[725] Nevertheless, the narrator is able to maintain that his "general appearance was certainly not that of death," based on two observable signs: Valdemar's barely perceptible breath—"scarcely noticeable, unless through the application of a mirror to the lips"—and surprisingly enduring capacity for verbal speech.[726] Indeed, when asked if he is "asleep, "a term whose ambiguity increases as the story unfolds, Valdemar responds: "Yes; —asleep now. Do not wake me! —let me die so!"; then "No pain —I am dying"; "Yes; still asleep dying."[727]

By allowing *logos*—in Valdemar's mind and speech—to remain operative beyond organic degradation, Poe's representation of mesmeric sleep begins to bridge the gap between two states: mesmeric trance on the one hand, and lucid-death on the other.[728] In Valdemar's utterance, the absence of punctuation to separate the terms 'asleep' and 'dying' reinforces the impression of a transition from the former to the latter, both of which are temporally blended together in the participle "dying," which *extends* the duration of the state of suspension.

This gradual transition is suddenly precipitated and interrupted when Valdemar appears to have crossed the border between life (*dying*) and death (*being dead*). First of all, a series of physiological changes takes place: "The eyes rolled themselves slowly open, the pupils disappearing upwardly; the skin generally assumed a cadaverous hue, resembling not so much parchment as white paper; and the circular hectic spots which, hitherto, had been strongly defined in the centre of each cheek, went out at once."[729] All signs of life are drained out of the body, removing the color and fullness from its description, emptying it out.[730] Then, the grotesque sign of death emerges from the very space-orifice from which life previously emanated: "the mouth

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[724] "I requested the gentlemen present to examine M. Valdemar's condition. After a few experiments, they admitted him to be an unusually perfect state of mesmeric trance." Ibid., 94.
[725] Ibid., 95.
[726] Ibid.
[727] Ibid.
[728] These equally "unnatural" states—the former being artificially induced and the latter "impossible" or "inaccessible" to ordinary human consciousness—are juxtaposed yet distinct, and would remain disconnected without the connection provided by the magnetic induction.
[729] Ibid., 95.
[730] Descriptive language itself is also emptied out, as the only remaining lexical field is one of disappearance and morbid pallor ("disappearing," "white paper," "went out").

widely extended, and disclosing in full view the swollen and blackened tongue."[731] The tongue acting simultaneously as the sign of corporeal death and the instrument of language, its decay and corruption suggested by the participle 'blackened' is both physiological and discursive. As we shall see, this decay spreads to the narrative voice itself as the tale draws to an end, and approaches Valdemar's impossible utterance. Indeed, as Adam Frank has shown, the agency of "expression or writing itself" is transferred "from the mesmerist to Valdemar's tongue" itself, as the narrator becomes increasingly incapable of producing adequate descriptions of the impossible situation.[732]

The sudden interruption caused by Valdemar's apparent physical death inserts a second kind of suspension into the story, creating a pause in the temporality of the narrative, during which the narrator is led to take a step back and comment on his own story. This metanarrative insertion points toward—and thus influences—possible reactions from the reader, reverting to the discourse of skepticism: "I now feel that I have reached a point of this narrative at which every reader will be startled into positive disbelief." It is my business, however, simply to proceed."[733] By referring back to the opening of the story, this metanarrative gesture creates a looping motion, with which incredulity is folded back onto the text's own sense of authority, based on narrative duty ("my business").[734] Here, as the operator would with the subject, the narrative voice proposes an implicit contract, in which the progression of the story is contingent on the acknowledgment of the extraordinary nature of the "reality" that it describes, on a suspension of disbelief that opens up the natural to what was previously deemed impossible.

In the final scene, the idea that language can be rendered "unambiguous" and offer a full description and "single univocal interpretation" of the situation is dismissed by the text itself.[735] In this scene, the fragmentation of Valdemar's body—which no longer belongs to an individual—is pushed to its extreme, its separate parts seemingly acting out of their own accord.[736] The description of his voice fails to grasp it as a whole, and can only seize *parts* of it.[737] Repeatedly

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[731] Ibid., 95.
[732] Adam Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue, Poe's Telegraphy" *ELH* 72, no. 3 (Fall, 2005): 654.
[733] "A strong vibratory motion was observable in the tongue," "there issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice" Poe, Ibid., 95.
[734] Significantly, it is highly similar to the hypnotic technique of fractionation described in Chapter 3, with which the hypnotist creates distance or temporarily "awakens" the subject, in order to then reimmerse them more fully into their imaginary experience.
[735] Diemert, "Recomposing 'Valdemar'," 428.
[736] Poe, Ibid., 95.
[737] "Here issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice—such as it would be madness in me to attempt describing. There are, indeed, two or three epithets which might be considered as applicable to it in part; I might say,

invoking the indescribable and ineffable dimension of the scene, the narrative voice both acknowledges its own impotence and notes the inability of language to describe a phenomenon which escapes both the domain of the natural and the conceptual categories available to describe it. Therefore, in parallel to the destruction of Valdemar's body, the story seems to stage "the disintegration of P--'s writing in shuttling between the figurative and the inexpressible."[738] This general impossibility is reinforced in Valdemar's words by the juxtaposition of the positive and negative, then the repetition of "now," before the impossible utterance is pronounced at last : "Yes;—no;—I have been sleeping—and now—now—I am dead."[739]

In the face of the "unutterable, shuddering horror which these few words, thus uttered, were so well calculated to convey," Mr. L, the medical student, faints—this time ironically suggesting the fragility of medical authority in the face of the unexplained—while others "bus[y] [them]selves, silently—without the utterance of a word."[740] The absence of speech ("silently") and of consciousness ("fainted") thus serve to frame *and* reinforce the impossible, contradictory dimension of the unutterable utterance which has just occurred.

Impossible Utterances, Impossible Endings.

Indeed, as Roland Barthes puts it, in uttering the impossible, "I am dead," Valdemar's words invent an "unheard of category: the 'true-false', the 'yes-no' the 'death-life'."[741] For Barthes, in Valdemar's utterance, "language serves no purpose … it is nothing but itself," affirming an essence that is not in its place."[742]

Furthermore, as Diemert argues, the paradoxical utterance also establishes Valdemar—or rather, one might add, his magnetic state—as "a cypher for the text itself."[743] Indeed, as the site of suspension between life and death, Valdemar's magnetic sleep can also be taken to correspond to the space of writing itself, as what Peter Brooks describes as the "dilatory space' of postponement

for example, that the sound was harsh, and broken and hollow; but the hideous whole is indescribable, for the simple reason that no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ear of humanity." Poe, Ibid., 95.

[738] Frank, 654.

[739] Poe, 95.

[740] Ibid., 95.

[741] Barthes, "Textual Analysis of Poe's 'Valdemar'," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader,* ed. R. Young (Boston: Routledge, 1981), 154.

[742] Ibid., 153. Indeed, Valdemar's words "fully exposes the gap between the signified and the signifier, and between the event and the narration of the event, since the self-cancelling nature of the utterance evades lexical certainty. Diemert, 429.

[743] Ibid., 429.

and error ... wherein narrative perpetuates itself ... while always moving towards its end."[744] Not only does this description apply to Poe's tale, which is structured on the principle of extending its own narrative suspension, but according to Diemert, insofar as "suspense occurs at all levels of the narrative's discourse," it might also apply to *all* narratives.[745]

Nevertheless, just as the narrative must come to a close, so must the unnatural mesmeric suspension, if the experiment is to reach a conclusion. At this stage, Valdemar has been maintained in the state of mesmeric sleep, his death suspended, for seven months.[746] Although his body is reduced to a corpse, his "soul" still appears to be alive. However, as the doctors conclude, "death (or what is usually termed death) had been arrested by the mesmeric process, and awakening Valdemar from trance would imply putting him to "sleep" for good.[747] Exiting one—artificial—form of sleep would imply entering another—natural—final one: "to awaken M. Valdemar would be merely to insure his instant, or at least his speedy dissolution."[748]

Therefore, when Valdemar is finally "reliev[ed] from the mesmeric trance, a double destruction occurs, this time explosive rather than gradual. First of all, the "usual" or previous conditions for speech have been completely disrupted and the whole process occurs "amid ejaculations of 'dead! dead!' absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer."[749] Second, an acceleration of organic decomposition occurs, in which the gruesome bodily discharge signifies the process by which the material has finally *caught up* with the narrative ellipsis and the passage of time."[750] The ordinary natural laws of material objects having been

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[744] Brooks, *Reading for the Plot,* 96. "The 'dilatory space' of narrative, as Barthes calls it-the space of retard, postponement, error, and partial revelation-is the place of transformation: where the problems posed to and by initiatory desire are worked out and worked through." Ibid., 92.

[745] Diemert, 430.

[746] "From this period until the close of last week—an interval of nearly seven months—we continued to make daily calls at M. Valdemar's house, accompanied, now and then, by medical and other friends. All this time the sleeper-waker remained exactly as I have last described him. The nurses' attentions were continual." Poe, 95.

[747] Poe, 95.

[748] Ibid., 95.

[749] Ibid., 95, emphasis added. When he is awakened and asked about his "feelings or wishes now?" the semi-dead individual begins by verbally manifesting impatient distress: "For God's sake! — quick! —quick! —put me to sleep—or, quick!—waken me! —quick! —I say to you that I am dead!"[749] Here, the ambiguity of the terms "sleep" and "awake"—which have both a 'natural' and a 'mesmeric' sense, referring either to trance and somnambulism or to natural sleep and death—is uncannily, almost ironically reinforced by the accumulation of short segments and staccato rhythm of his words, while Valdemar himself is suspended, simultaneously alive and dead, asleep and awake, existing "both a presence and an absence." Poe 95; Diemert, 429.

[750] When he is awakened and asked about his "feelings or wishes now?" the semi-dead individual begins by verbally manifesting impatient distress: "For God's sake! — quick! —quick! —put me to sleep—or, quick!—waken me! —quick! —I say to you that I am dead!"[750] Here, the ambiguity of the terms "sleep" and "awake"—which have both a 'natural' and a 'mesmeric' sense, referring either to trance and somnambulism or to natural sleep and death—is

violated, the sudden and immediate dissolution of the very subject of the narrative coincides with that of his body: "his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute, or even less, shrunk—crumbled—absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands."[751]

The final result is merely a trace, a material remnant of what used to be Valdemar, a whole now devoid of parts and lacking differentiation: "a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity."[752] Approximation, comparison and vagueness ("nearly") seem to have completely replaced the scientific precision and rigor of the beginning of the story.[753] They appear as the only rhetorical means available to a narrative voice which has lost all authority, and whose available vocabulary and concepts fail to produce a full description or understanding of the situation. Whereas the narrator had initially promised to explain the facts in the case of M. Valdemar and present the truth of his situation, the final paragraph of the story merely his dissolution: "no further explanation is forthcoming."[754]

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As we have seen in these three stories, although Poe's literary representations of Mesmerism "attempt to achieve the sensational without deliberately attempting to mislead," they also uses the medical phenomenon of magnetism to produce a literalized, fictional, poetic-philosophical exploration of the limits of the human finitude.[755] In this sense, like Balzac's, they are "fictional, if not impossible *extensions* of contemporary mesmeric theory."[756]

As it momentarily—and experimentally—suspends the usual distinctions between states and concepts, mesmeric sleep serves as a rhetorical tool, a "scientific guarantee" and an imaginative framework from within which the relations between life and death, body and matter

uncannily, almost ironically reinforced by the accumulation of short segments and staccato rhythm of his words, while Valdemar himself is suspended, simultaneously alive and dead, asleep and awake, existing "both a presence and an absence." Poe 95; Diemert, 429.

[751] Poe, 96.

[752] Ibid., 96. The decayed organic matter seems to concentrate or serve as a substrate for mankind's general repulsion in the face of death.

[753] Here the qualifiers "loathsome" and "detestable" convey more information about the possible attitudes to be adopted towards the object or phenomenon than about its nature, texture or composition.

[754] Diemert, 429. As Adam Frank argues, with this brutal ending, the temporal collapse and that of Valdemar's "frame" are both "mapped onto the collapse of the frame of the tale" itself. See Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue," 655.

[755] Lind, 1094,

[756] Ibid., emphasis added.

can be explored, to their "horrid" extremes. It concretizes an impossible thought experiment that allows to *live through* death, to make the unconscious conscious, the ineffable describable, to turn absence into presence, to make the impossible to momentarily possible. Like fiction, it requires the temporary adhesion of the subject. In this sense, it also serves to extend the scope of narrative possibilities, and stretches the limits of medical, literary and linguistic discourse, as in Balzac's *Ursule Mirouët*.

As Falk has observed, because they are still based on early nineteenth-century magnetic models—as opposed to the mid-century psychological definitions of hypnotism emerging in the medical field—Poe's tales on mesmerism emphasize its "physical, cosmic properties," rather than its "psychological, interpersonal ones."[757] In particular, they underline its—imaginary—"power to suspend animation," taking seriously and literalizing the idea that the mesmerized subject is both unconscious and mentally active.[758] Fifty years before its Freudian invention, the possibility of a psychical unconscious is here thinkable only from within a spiritualist paradigm, in terms of a "soul" surviving corporeal death, with suspension serving as the most adequate concept to reconcile the idea of the *mental* with that of an *absence of* consciousness.

As we shall see in the next section, whereas in the writing of Balzac magnetism served to strengthen the "scientific" dimension of spiritualism, and in that of Poe, to push the limits of the scientifically knowable to their breaking point, later in the century, in Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* it is used to point out the limitations of scientific and philosophical knowledge itself, both material and spiritual.

2.1.3. Skepticism and Parody: Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*

As the second half of the century progressed, the earlier enthusiastic conceptions of magnetism—whether it be the belief in the existence of an imponderable fluid permeating nature, or in the spiritualist and occult dimension evoked in the works of Balzac or Poe—were revised. After the 1840s, as magnetism was increasingly dematerialized, reframed and renamed as

[757] Falk, 537. In Poe's magnetic model, because of the existence of the magnetic fluid, there is not the action of a will upon another (as in Lind's interpretation) but rather the union of two wills" which "release the power of animal magnetism to perform its organizing function"; and in this rapport, the magnetist "is only a stagehand—a combination of light-man and prompter… he did not write the script" (Falk. 546). In this sense, magnetism implies a horizontal fluidic circulation rather than the vertical domination of an individual will over another.
[758] Ibid., 543.

"hypnotism," its effects were attributed—as they already were by the 1784 commission—to the imagination and mental faculties of the subject. Although this evolution from magnetism to hypnotism occurred more slowly in the literary domain than in the medical field, the increase in circulation between literary and scientific discourse toward the end of the century led to renewed, more psychological, conceptions of hypnotism in *fin-de-siècle* literary fiction.

However, as I will show in this section, in the 1870s it was already was starkly apparent in the work of Gustave Flaubert, whose parodic treatment of magnetism in *Bouvard et Pécuchet* captures the transition from magnetism to hypnotism by sketching out a parallel trajectory, from enthusiasm to skepticism.[759]

Indeed, because it challenges post-Enlightenment medical and scientific discourse, and as Alain Corbin writes, "reconsiders the ancient duality of the body and the soul," magnetism is an ideal object for Flaubert's parodic exposition of the limits of scientific and popular knowledge.[760] As we have argued up until here, this is due in great part to the fundamental undecidability at the heart of the magnetic-hypnotic object, to the opposition between its seemingly undeniable effects and its unexplainable causes. In a letter to Louise Collet, Flaubert even expresses his "irritation" toward magnetism, calling it one of the "unresolvable" notions which "whether one speaks well or ill of them" cause irritation.[761] However, Flaubert's exasperation here is not directed toward magnetism *per se,* but rather toward "all forms of dogmatism," especially those that attempt to produce a final explanation of a given phenomenon. Indeed, as Juliette Azoulai has noted, Flaubert wrote that "materialism and spiritualism are equally impertinent," and that the material and spiritual—as in nervous diseases for example—are "indissoluble."[762] In this sense, as we shall see, the Flaubertian criticism of magnetism is first and foremost a criticism of the dogmatic dimension of all monisms, whether materialist or spiritualist. The parodic treatment of mesmerism is a means

[759] Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet: A Tragi-Comic Novel of Bourgeois Life*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1978). Left unfinished in 1870—the year of Flaubert's death—the text was published posthumously in 1881. The text as a whole is constructed on the fundamental controversy between Bouvard's materialism (who believes neither in the existence nor in the causality of a transcendent God) and Pécuchet's spiritualism (who believes in the immortality of the soul, in God, in final causes, and the prominence of spirit over matter).

[760] Alain Corbin, "Le XIXème siècle ou la nécessité de l'assemblage," in *L'Invention du XIXème siècle* (Klincksieck: Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1999), 159.

[761] In this letter, Flaubert writes that like any idea, such irritating topics "must not be taken by one end but in the middle" ("Il ne faut pas sans doute prendre une idée par un bout, mais par son milieu"), because "most of the time, concluding seems to [him] an act of stupidity" ("La conclusion, la plupart du temps, me semble acte de bêtise"). Flaubert, Letter to Louise Colet, 31 mars 1853, in *Correspondance* II, 295.

[762] Juliette Azoulai, *L'Âme et le corps chez Flaubert. Une ontologie simple* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), 19.

to carry out this broader critique of monism's consistent failure to grasp the richness and complexity of the "facts" that it wishes to explain, and exhaust.

Furthermore, as I will argue, by representing magnetism on the parodic mode in Chapter VIII of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, Flaubert is implicitly making a case for hypnotism, which appears as an alternative model to explain the phenomena that the main characters grapple with. In Flaubert's text, the hypnotic model thus inserts itself in the gap between the characters' naive fluidist beliefs and the ironic distance of the narrative voice—a gap which is also temporal and separates the narrative perspective of the 1870s from that of the characters in the 1850s. Indeed, Flaubert's text both exposes and participates in the debate between "psychofluidist" and "imaginationist" explanations of hypnosis, providing ironic criticism of mid-century naiveté from the perspective of the latter half of the century, through the distance between the text and the various discourses which it confronts, revealing their internal contradictions and limitations.

As Florence Vatan has shown, in *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* the thirst for knowledge is both a motor and a structuring principle of the narrative, while simultaneously being the object of a constant *mise en abyme*. With Flaubert's text, "literature is born out of an intimate and conflictual relation to the forms of knowledge which it incorporates and subverts."[763] As a thematic object, magnetism thus helps demonstrate how the discourses and objects which remained unquestioned in the first half of the century, gradually underwent the scrutiny—especially with the experimental medicine of Claude Bernard and positivism of Auguste Comte—of an increasingly critical discourse, announcing the emergence of the golden age of experimental hypnosis fifteen years later in Paris.

In this way, hypnosis is put in the service of the Flaubertian process, where, as Jacques Neefs has shown, contradictory or competing models are confronted, "so that their immediate or fundamental problematic dimension can emerge."[764]

2.1.3.1. The Parodic-Skeptical Treatment of Magnetism

[763] Florence Vatan, "Du désir de savoir à l'art de (faire) rêver," *Revue Flaubert* n° 4 (2004): 1.
[764] "Flaubert prend le parti de faire se rencontrer les contradictions ou les versions concurrentes pour en faire remonter les fonds problématiques immédiats, ou fondamentaux." Jacques Neefs, **"**Paroles en l'air, l'espace des dialogues dans *Bouvard et Pécuchet.*" *Revue Flaubert* 13 (2013): 5.

Although the magnetotrope was operative in Flaubert's earlier work, it mainly served as a metaphor to describe the phenomena of erotic attraction and crowd psychology.[765] According to Kayoko Kashiwagi, Flaubert's interest for magnetism *per se* "developed while he was writing *Bouvard et Pécuchet*.[766] In fact, as Vatan has argued, Flaubert's interest in the phenomenon of suggestion is linked to the very project of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (where "both characters evolve, so to speak, in a state of chronic suggestion") and to "its reflection on the multiple forms of social mimesis, including the circulation of *idées reçues* (received ideas).*"*[767]As is well known, in Flaubert's tragic-comic encyclopedia, numerous forms of spiritualist and occultist beliefs, conceptions, and practices are presented, which all undergo the attacks of the ironic, skeptical narrative voice. Chapter VIII, titled "New Diversions," takes magnetism as its central object, and uses it to cast skeptical doubt on *both* materialist and spiritualist paradigms. In Flaubert's text, the parodic representations of magnetism are pitted against the medical authority of the Dr. Vaucorbeil—itself an object of parody—who, unlike Bouvard and Pécuchet, is able to explain the "true nature" of the object of experimentation: unknowingly, Bouvard and Pécuchet are practicing hypnotism, not magnetism. As I will show in this section, underlying Flaubert's representation of magnetism is his conception of hypnotism and suggestion, against which magnetist practice is pitted, in parodic fashion.

The Introduction of Magnetism

In Chapter VIII of *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* magnetism appears after Bouvard and Pécuchet abandon the—corporeal—practice of gymnastics and discover spiritism.[768] Indeed, Bouvard and Pécuchet initially take up magnetism to investigate the contradictory explanations of the in-vogue

[765] In *Madame Bovary* for example, magnetism is used to describe the growing desire between Emma and Rodolphe, while in *L'Éducation Sentimentale,* it is briefly used to describe the suggestibility of the crowd during the 1848 revolutionary upheaval. See for instance: "Rodolphe with Madame Bovary was talking dreams, pressentiments, magnetism… From magnetism little by little Rodolphe had come to affinities and … was explaining to the young woman that these irresistible attractions find their cause in one's previous state of existence." Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, 119-120. See also: "De droite et de gauche, partout, les vainqueurs déchargeaient leurs armes. Frédéric, bien qu'il ne fût pas guerrier, sentit bondir son sang gaulois. Le magnétisme des foules enthousiastes l'avait pris," Flaubert, *L'Éducation Sentimentale*, ed. P. M. de Biasi (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2002), 434-435.
[766] Kayoko Kashiwagi, "Emma Bovary: parfaite hystérique ou 'poète hystérique'?" In *Madame Bovary et les savoirs* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2009), 218.
[767] Vatan, "Du désir de savoir à l'art de (faire) rêver," 12.
[768] Flaubert, *Bouvard and Peécuchet,* 183.

phenomenon of *tables tournantes* (table-turning).[769] In the structure of the opening of the text, therefore, it is established as a possible "scientific" explanation of occultist practices, at the juncture of the material and spiritual. In its initial appearance, two forms of knowledge are opposed, which run throughout the chapter: experiential or empirical observation on the one hand, and analytic or skeptical knowledge on the other: "Bouvard *denied the facts*, but nevertheless agreed to *experiment himself.*"[770] Indeed, in Flaubert's text, both forms of knowledge challenge one another in a constant oscillation that underlines the limits of orthodox medical discourse. Indeed, denying the "facts" of magnetism does not exhaust the fascination which emerges from acknowledging its effects.

After delving into the theory of magnetism, Pécuchet then begins experimenting with inducing the somnambulist state. Its induction, however, does not fit the conditions for experimental inquiry. It is neither objective nor reproducible and thus challenge preexisting models for rationality: "'All right, put me to sleep,' said Bouvard. 'Impossible!' replied Pécuchet: 'for someone to experience the magnetic action, and to transmit it, faith is indispensable'."[771] As this description shows, Flaubert's text is familiar with the various branches of magnetism described in Chapter 1, and seems to adopt the imaginationist and psychofluidist models, which attribute the hypnotic state—at least in part—to the faculties and mental activity of the subject.

However, because the characters are practicing with an instruction manual titled *Magnetiser's Guide* by the fictional author Montacabère, they still follow the old mesmeric—fluidist—models that were quickly losing ground after the 1840s. The manual affirms, for instance, that although "science has developed since Mesmer," it is "an important thing to pour out the fluid and to make the passes."[772] By mimicking the technical language used before Puységur and enumerating the various types of magnetic passes—"ascending or descending, longitudinal,

[769] Shocked by Bouvard's materialist position, the notary invites both men to a *séance.* In the scene, although most characters appear as naive and credulous, conducting faulty reasoning and blaming the table for their failures in conjuring the spirits. The guests all seem to come from an earlier time, such as Mlle Laverrière, who is subjected to a cruel description which portrays her as "strange" and displaying a hair do from the 1830s. In the end, it is impossible to determine whether the experience is successful or a failure, as interpretations are multiplied and the comical dimension of the text intensifies (the table fails to move, the guests accuse each other of pushing it, the spirit makes rowdy inappropriate jokes and innuendos. Nevertheless, Pécuchet leaves the séance "astonished by the evening." This leads him to the hypothesis that the flow of magnetic current between the participants is what moves the table. Flaubert, *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* 188.
[770] Ibid., emphasis added.
[771] Ibid.
[772] Ibid.

transversal, with two, three or even five fingers"—the text emphasizes the antiquated dimension of the character's theoretical apparatus.[773] If there is to be any magnetic success, it will have to occur on a practical level.

Unfortunately, the first attempt at a therapeutic use of magnetism is a failure and a quasi-parody of the Balzacian séance with the somnambulist woman. Indeed, the text substitutes natural sleep for magnetic sleep in Germaine, the servant who, with "her eyes closed and quite gently she began to snore. After they had looked at her for an hour, Pécuchet said in a low voice: 'What do you feel?' She woke up. Later, no doubt, lucidity would come."[774] Here, the expression "no doubt" reinforces the ironic distance between the character's enthusiasm and the narration's skeptical doubt. After both men have practiced on numerous individuals, Bouvard's first success occurs with the character of La Barbée, a woman displaying various hysterical symptoms. This time, the subject displays all the expected signs of hypnotic trance:

> He placed his finger between her eyebrows at the top of her nose: suddenly she became inert. When her arms were raised they fell back; her head stayed in whatever position he chose, and her half-closed lids, vibrating spasmodically, revealed the eyeballs, rolling slowly; they stayed fixed in the corners, convulsed.[775]

Following the magnetic theory of Puységur and Deleuze, the patient then displays the signs of somnambulism which we described in Chapter 1: clairvoyance, endoscopy, "remedy instinct" (the ability to diagnose her own disease and prescribe her own treatment), and is cured from her illness after a few sessions. Significantly, the narrator's skepticism here seems to disappear momentarily, as the text remains euphemistically silent as to the *causes* of the cure, focusing solely on the effect: "it was really like a miracle."[776]

Nevertheless, this silence is short lived. Indeed, in the rest of the chapter, while Bouvard and Pécuchet try to prove the existence of the fluid, the text constantly reinjects a polemic dimension into the question, structuring its movement on the oscillation between argument and counterargument. The productive tension created by the opposition between medical discourse and empirical facts—or "miraculous" healings—also keeps the text moving forwards, preparing the scene for two central parodic examples: that of the magnetized cow and tree. As we shall see, under the guise of tackling the problem, raised by Dr. Vaucorbeil's skepticism, of practicing magnetism on non-human subjects, these examples push the parodic treatment of magnetism to its

[773] Ibid., 190.
[774] Ibid., 189.
[775] Ibid., 189-190.
[776] Ibid., 190.

paroxysm. By inserting ironic distance between the observable, successful effects of magnetism and the characters' fallacious reasoning about its causes, the text acknowledges the—unstable—therapeutic efficacy of magnetism while vehemently denying the existence of the fluid, which only seems to exist in the minds of Bouvard and Pécuchet and their naive subjects.

The Magnetized Cow: a Parody of the Fluidist Model

> The apple-trees were in blossom, and the grass in the yard steamed under the rising sun. At the edge of the pond, half covered with a cloth, a cow was lowing, shivering with the pails of water that had been thrown over it, and so immeasurably swollen that it looked like a hippopotamus. No doubt it had eater some 'poison' as it grazed in the clover. Old Gouy and his wife were distraught, for the vet would not come, and the wheelwright who knew words to use against swelling did not wat to be bothered; but our two gentlemen, with their famous library, must have some secret knowledge.[777]

Although this paragraph opens with a quasi-pastoral description of the landscape, it contains a subtly parodic dimension, in the juxtaposition of the "grass" and the participle "steaming," which anticipates the appearance of the cow-dung. The cow's situation seems somewhat absurd: her "lowing" indicates distress, the function of the "cloth" remains unclear, while the temporary remedy—throwing pails of water at her—seems highly ineffective. This failure of the "natural" fluid ironically anticipates the "success" of the magnetic one.[778] Clearly, the farmers have called upon Bouvard and Pécuchet as a last resort, owing to the fact the veterinarian and the wheelwright are both unavailable. Significantly, it is to the "encyclopedic" knowledge of their "famous library" that they owe their reputation; the term "secret" here suggesting that a mysterious form of knowledge, inaccessible to both peasants and veterinarians—that is, to empirical knowledge and the medical and natural sciences—alike.[779] The men's magnetic demonstration and their comically exaggerated gesturing then indicate an adherence to fluidic hypothesis, which is ridiculed by the text:

> They rolled up their sleeves and placed themselves one at the horns, the other at the tail, and with great inward efforts and frantic gesticulation they spread out their fingers to pour out streams of fluid over the animal, while the farmer and his wife, their lad and some neighbors looked on almost in terror. The rumblings that could be heard in the cow's belly made their own insides bubble. It broke wind. Then Pécuchet said: 'That opens the door to hope, there is a way out, perhaps.' The way out worked, hope gushed out in a tub full of yellow matter exploding like a bomb. Hearts were eased. The cow's swelling went down. An hour later,

[777] Ibid., 191.
[778] Furthermore, the visual comparison between the cow and hippopotamus is justified by her swelling. Not only does this hyperbolic image reinforce the comic dimension, it is also justified by the proximity with the neighboring "pond," as if by a process of fluidic contagion, the water created an association between both animals, suggesting that the cow's body, which is both *next to* and *soaked by* water, is also somehow swollen with water.
[779] Ibid., 191.

> nothing showed. It was not the effect of the imagination, that was certain. So the fluid does contain some peculiar property.[780]

Here, the men's "great inward efforts" to project the fluid externally mime the cow's own biological expulsion, in a Rabelaisian scatological pun on the term "matter." The "pouring out" of the "streams" further suggests the materiality of the fluid, which is opposed to the inefficiency of the pails of water previously thrown onto—rather than projected *through*—the cow. Here the "opening" or is both literal and metaphorical, organic and conceptual, material and immaterial: it refers both to the orifice of the animal body and to the solution of the problem (the appearance of hope).

In a description reminiscent of Valdemar's "nearly liquid mass of liquid putridity," here "hope" is materialized into the "bundle" of yellow "stuff"—the French plural *matières* emphasizing this aspect even further—subverting the question of the material and the spiritual by tying it to the grotesque and bodily theme of excretion. When the tension—both physical and emotional—recedes, the brief formula "noting showed" ironically recalls the previous observation used to describe the curative effects of magnetism, "It was really like a miracle."

The expression "that was certain" and the adverb "so" subtly underline the dangers of abusive deductions, which transform a relation of coexistence into a relation of causality. In this way, the text ironically indicates that the conclusion about the fluid's "peculiar property" is the product of the characters' fallacious thinking, a hasty deduction about the cause of the phenomenon. Indeed, here, only the effects have been objectively acknowledged ("the cow's swelling went down"). In this way the text distances itself from the characters' credulity.

The example of the magnetized cow thus serves to undermine the fluidic hypothesis, dismissing it as a *petitio principii* which discards other possible causes and "proves" what the characters already believe to be true.

The Magnetized Tree: a Parody of Hypnotic Theatricality

The scene of the magnetized tree serves to challenge a second "epistemological model," with just as strong a parodic dimension. This episode is presented as a technical improvement, a "scientific progress" of the characters:

> Continuing their studies, they gave up mesmeric passes for the system of Puységur, which replaces the magnetiser by an old tree, with a cord rolled round its trunk. A pear-tree in their yard seemed made just for

[780] Ibid.

> it. They prepared it by hugging it tightly several times. A bench was set up underneath. Their clients sat there in line and they obtained such marvelous results that, to confound Vaucorbeil, they invited him to a session, with the local notables.[781]

As suggested in this passage, the magnetized tree—a practice used both by Mesmer and Puységur—functions both as a challenge to medical discourse and a spectacle, a quasi-theatrical performance that gathers the leading personages of the locality, not merely as experimental subjects, but also as *audience*.[782] Clearly, the subjects of the experiment expect entertainment just as much as they expect a cure, both being intertwined in a discipline whose curative effects were often attributed to its theatrical dimension and to the charisma of the operator. In setting up this experimental "stage," this episode anticipates the spirit of the Charcotian demonstrations in the medical amphitheater: rather than place the emphasis on the curative or therapeutic potential of hypnosis (which Puységur was strongly attached to, Bouvard and Pécuchet "reduce their patients to experimental subjects, even instruments of scientific advertisement."[783]

Nevertheless, as the scene unfolds, the bourgeois guests cannot help but point out the appalling condition of the setting to each another, echoing the contempt that stage magnetism received as a "lower" form of entertainment, despite its popular appeal.[784] Furthermore, the absence of spectacular or dramatic effects in Bouvard and Pécuchet's demonstration causes their expectations are to be disappointed. Indeed, the induction of trance through the magnetized tree proves to be a failure: "instead of sleeping, had their eyes wide open. 'So far it is not much fun,' said Foureau."[785]

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[781] Flaubert, *Bouvard*, 192. Although various objects and elements—such as bread and water—were already magnetized in the time of Mesmer, here the text attributes the technique to Puységur, known indeed for curing somnambulistic patients around a magnetized tree, a "spectacle" which "ha[d] nothing in common with Mesmer's convulsions." Atsushi Yamazaki, "L'inscription d'un débat séculaire: le magnétisme dans *Bouvard et Pécuchet." Revue Flaubert* n° 4 (2004): 13.

[782] This element of spectacle reproduces the historical evolution of magnetism, where "after the rejection of animal magnetism by the academic establishment, a popular culture of magnetic demonstrators and healers continued to draw large audiences." Mayer, *Sites of the Unconscious.* 94. Significantly, the magnetic tree was a central experimental component in the establishment of the verdict of the Bailly commission. See Yamazaki, "L'inscription d'un débat séculaire," 16-19.

[783] Yamazaki, Ibid., 15.

[784] "The guests pointed out with a nudge the dusty windows, the stains on the panels, the peeling paint; and the garden was lamentable. Dead wood everywhere!" Ibid., 192 A similar process is found in Thomas Mann's description of Cipolla's shabby stage, except that here, the "dead wood" is also an ironic subversion of the supposedly magnetized, living, pear-tree.

[785] Flaubert, Ibid., 192.

It is perhaps this pressure to produce a theatrical spectacle that leads Pécuchet to turn to a technique that reinforces the parodic dimension of the scene by blending together multiple models: Mesmer and Puységur's paradigms, the magnetic with the electric, and so on. Indeed:

> Pécuchet remembered an excellent method of magnetization. He put the noses of all the patients into his mouth, and inhaled their breath to draw electricity to him, while at the same time Bouvard embraced the tree, with the aim of increasing the fluid.[786]

Surprisingly, despite this exaggerated multiplication of absurd gestures, the scene as a whole preserves the ambiguity of the narrative perspective, which does not dismiss Pécuchet's actions as pure charlatanry, but alternates between ironic doubt and observation of facts. For instance, the function of the article "the" (the fluid) seems to indicate the existence of a known, identifiable entity. Here at last, the patients finally appear to enter the somnambular state: "The mason interrupted his hiccoughs; the beadle went quieter; the man with the contraction stopped jerking. It was now possible to approach them, put them through all the tests."[787]

Nevertheless, as the Dr. Vaucorbeil conducts the expected tests (such as pricking the skin with a lancet to check for anesthesia, testing for clairvoyance, ability to see with the eyes blindfolded, etc.) he constantly denies the magnetic effects by opposing rational arguments which belong to the later decades rather than the first half of the century. Among these explanations, one finds the evocation of unconscious memories, the diagnosis of hysteria and the suspicion of cheating: "there's nothing surprising after all! A hysteric! You can't expect any sense out of that!"; "With a little skill any bandage can be slipped!"; "Come on now, that's a tall story!"[788] By introducing the vocabulary and skepticism of the medical discourse of the second half of the century, the doctor demonstrates a complete lack of "faith" in magnetism. Significantly, this is the very same faith which was defined as necessary to its success by Pécuchet in the beginning of the chapter.

In a passage reminiscent of Balzac's *Ursule Mirouët,* an experiment is thus set up to establish the veracity of La Barbée's clairvoyant powers: "These denials by the doctor revolted Pécuchet. He was bold enough to claim that La Barbée could describe what was going on in his own house at the moment."[789] However, unlike the shock and religious conversion which occur in

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[786] Ibid., 193.
[787] Ibid.
[788] Ibid., 193-94.
[789] When the Doctor Vaucorbeil asks: "What is my wife doing?" La Barbée replies "She is sewing ribbons on a straw hat!" Ibid., 194.

the Balzacian text, here, when Vaucorbeil receives a letter confirming the accuracy of the information provided by La Barbée, the doctor dismisses it: "A coincidence, upon my word! That proves nothing."[790] Although Bouvard and Pécuchet receive a second confirmation of the success of their therapeutic endeavors after the doctor's departure,[791] the narrative perspective sides with the medical perspective and leans towards skepticism rather than enthusiasm: "Bouvard and Pécuchet, all in all, had not succeeded."[792]

However, rather than produce a definitive conclusion, the text reinserts a layer of doubt and keeps the polemic going. Indeed, first of all, rather than acknowledge the nonexistence of the fluid, several attempts to explain Bouvard and Pécuchet's failure are enumerated. Clearly, the narrative perspective distances itself from this ultimate attempt, which searches for *causes* (here, of failure) in the wrong place: "Was it due to the temperature, or the smell of tobacco, or Abbé Jeufroy's umbrella, which had copper trimmings, a metal inimical to the emission of the fluid?"[793]

Secondly, the authority of the medical Doctor's skeptical discourse in undermined in several ways. For instance, it is attacked—on a social and political, rather than theoretical level—by Alexandre Petit, the new schoolmaster: "Petit, the progressive, had found the doctor's explanation prosaic, bourgeois. Science is a monopoly in the hands of the rich. It excludes the people. … Truth should be obtained through the heart, and, declaring himself to be spiritist, he indicated several works, no doubt defective, but which were signs of a new dawn."[794] Despite the ironic gaze cast upon this ultimate objection, the passage on magnetism ends at is began: with the temporary "victory" of spiritualism.[795] In this way, Flaubert's parodic treatment of magnetism maintains an ironic uncertainty throughout, an ambiguity that casts doubt *upon all forms of knowledge*: the heroes' conception of magnetism, medical discourse, as well as spiritualist and materialist monism in general. Flaubertian irony ultimately applies to all forms of reductive or dogmatic discourse by pointing out their contradictory aspects and inherent limitations.

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[790] Ibid., 195.
[791] "Marcel shot out of the orchard, his chinstrap undone: "Cured! Cured! Kind sirs!" Ibid.
[792] Ibid., 194.
[793] Ibid.
[794] Ibid., 196
[795] Nevertheless, this "victory" should not be attributed to the narrator having sided with one camp or another. Rather, it serves a structural function and allows the text to move to the section centered on philosophy.

2.1.3.2. From Magnetism to Hypnotism: Flaubertian Dematerialization.

In Flaubert's text, although this ambiguity also affects the medical discourse and its dubitative indignation. Indeed, Dr. Vaucorbeil's perspective serves a dual, quasi-contradictory function in the text. On the one hand, it is used to ironically mock the rigidity of orthodox medicine, while on the other, it grants it the—serious—role of dismissing magnetism in favor of the hypnotic paradigm.

On the one hand, unlike that of Larivière in *Madame Bovary*, Vaucorbeil is often ridiculed by the narrative perspective, his discourse is not spared by the ironic distance of the text. Indeed, despite the authority of his position, Vaucorbeil often displays signs of obtuse ignorance and remains deaf to the intelligence of the questions that emerge from the episode on magnetism. Rather than engage in the reflection prompted by the text, he is frequently found condemning the characters' experiments altogether, without considering their value. He is repeatedly found blushing and unable to provide thorough explanations of the phenomena at hand. Furthermore, in several occasions, the text suggests that the Doctor's hostility towards magnetism is not due to scientific but to pecuniary, financial reasons, as Bouvard and Pécuchet's success begins to impede upon Vaucorbeil's own clientele.[796]

On the other hand, despite Flaubert's "ironic, critical and subversive" relation to medical knowledge, Vaucorbeil also becomes the spokesman for the scientific discourse of the second half of the century, revealing his imaginationist conception of hypnosis at the end of the section on magnetism.[797] In doing so, he reveals knowledge that Bouvard and Pécuchet do not have access to.[798] Vaucorbeil's dismissal of mesmerism is caused by a dissatisfaction with the empirical "proof" that has been hitherto gathered, and the antiquated dimension of the fluidic model ("But prove it, show it, this fluid of yours! Besides, fluids are out of date. Listen to me").[799] Despite the criticism, mockery and ironic assaults of the Flaubertian narrator, his discourse is more historically

[796] "'What! you again?' he cried, furious at finding them again with his patients ... Then he fulminates against magnetism, a lot of conjuring tricks, whose effects derive from the imagination.'" Flaubert, 190.
[797] Florence Vatan, "Emma Bovary: 'poète hystérique' ou parfaite hystérique?" in *Madame Bovary et les savoirs*. Edited by P. L. Rey and G. Séginger (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2009), 229.
[798] As Yamazaki has shown, "the importance granted to the imagination" in Vaucorbeil's model implies "the denial of the existence of a fluid but also of the part played by the will of the magnetist in the appearance of somnambulism. Yamazaki, 14. On the other hand, Indeed, at the end of their experiments on magnetism, Bouvard and Pécuchet remain attached to their fluidist model: "Personally, I admit a fluid," replied Bouvard. "Neuro-siderial," added Pécuchet." Flaubert, 195.
[799] Flaubert, Ibid., 195.

accurate than the two heroes' older Mesmeric conception and participates in the "dematerialization" of the phenomenon.[800]

Indeed, just as earlier in the century, Balzac presented magnetism *via* the materialist-medical paradigm, here it is *via* Dr. Vaucorbeil's discourse that Flaubert's text introduces the hypnotic model and the concept suggestion, characteristic of the terminology used in the second half of the century.

For instance, once both companions have resumed their travels, a brief mention of Pécuchet falling into a strange state allows hypnotic trance to serve as an explanation for the unexplained:

> Pécuchet, however, was slowing down. His mouth fell open, his eyeballs became convulsed. Bouvard spoke to him, shook him by the shoulders: he did not stir and remained inert, exactly like Barbée. … The next day Pécuchet sat down beside a ditch; and as he dreamed … he fixed his gaze on the peak of his cap; he fell into the same trance as the day before. … The crisis was about to finish when the doctor arrived. … Vaucorbeil watched him, then with a flick of his fingers knocked the cap off. Pécuchet recovered his faculties. 'I thought as much,' said the doctor. 'That shiny peak hypnotized you like a mirror, and the phenomenon is by no means rare with people who look too closely at a bright object![801]

Here, the opposition between Pécuchet's spiritualist concerns and the "scientific," Braidian, concept of fixation reveals the gap between the protagonists' world-views.[802] With the intervention of the medical discourse, the rationalist invocation of the hypnotic induction—which, as we saw in Braid's model, is caused by focusing the gaze on a shiny object—illuminates Pécuchet's state and cuts through both spiritualist *and* fluidist explanations.[803]

In his explanation of somnambulism as the product of hypnotic suggestion, the doctor also emphasizes the psychological and affective—rather than physiological and purely material—dimension of the phenomena explored in Chapter VIII:

> If you say to a child: 'I am a wolf; I am going to eat you,' he imagines you are a wolf, and he is afraid; so that is a dream controlled by words. In the same way a somnambulist will accept any fantasy you like. … This is how crimes are suggested and virtuous people may see themselves as wild beasts and become cannibals.' They looked at Bouvard and Pécuchet. Their science could be dangerous for society.[804]

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[800] Mayer, *Sites of the Unconscious,* 75.
[801] Flaubert, Ibid., 202.
[802] Indeed, Pécuchet is holding "his head high, trying to hear the spirit voices though his aromal proboscis [i.e. his astral body]." Ibid.
[803] Vaucorbeil also demonstrates his knowledge of zoohypnotism, "point[ing] out how to conduct the experiment on hens," thus retrospectively dismissing the theoretical postulates behind Bouvard and Pécuchet's attempts to *magnetize* the cow at the beginning of the chapter. Ibid., 202.
[804] Ibid., 195.

In this passage, the "child" and the hypnotic subject seem to be placed on the same level and undergo equal degrees of infantilization by the authority of the medical discourse. Storytelling and hypnosis are also brought together as manifestations of the suggestive and performative dimension of language, the power of words to "conjure up visions." In his notes, Flaubert himself mentions the ubiquity of suggestion, anticipating the Bernheimian conception of the end of the century: "But who is to say that everything, in human life, isn't suggested, by somebody or some thing? How can one be sure of the contrary? What is true?"[805]

Echoing the anxieties of the time and anticipating those of the *fin-de-siècle*, Vaucorbeil therefore condemns hypnotism for its supposed moral dangers, citing the case of "hypnotic crimes" to denounce the purportedly animalistic and "primitive" states it might lead to. In such discourses—which were also found in nineteenth century theories of crowd psychology—hypnotism is no longer the ally but the enemy of culture and scientific progress.

As we saw in this section, by inserting ironic distance between the medical discourse on hypnotism and the characters' discourse on magnetism, the text therefore reveals the temporal distance which separated both of the paradigms which it encompasses. Furthermore, it emphasizes the difficulties faced by medical practitioners who strived to dissociate their field from the older magnetic model, well into the second half of the century. As we will see in the next section, although these "magnetic" connotations were still attached to the practice in literary texts of the end of the century, this time, the ambiguity was purposefully used by authors of literary fiction to radicalize the sensationalist and *fascinating* dimension of hypnotism.

2.2. ***Fin-de-siècle*** **Fear and Fascination**

As we saw in Chapter 1, in the medical field, hypnosis "struggle[ed] to detach itself from a superstitious past" from the 1840s onwards.[806] By the 1880s, most practitioners considered, as Bernheim himself noted, that "magnetism is dead together with alchemy, and hypnotic suggestion is born of magnetism as chemistry is born of alchemy."[807] Nevertheless, well into the second half of the century, medical hypnotists still had to distinguish their practice from those of the stage

[805] Flaubert, quoted in Yamazaki, 31.
[806] Atia Sattar, "Certain Madness: Guy de Maupassant and Hypnotism." *Configurations* 19, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 219.
[807] Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 106.

magnetizers, with which they continued to be associated in the mind of the public, as well as from the variety of occult parapsychological practices that thrived at the end of the century.[808]

As we will see in the second half of this chapter, *fin-de-siècle* conceptions of hypnotism emerged from the frequent crossing, by novelists and scientists alike, of the boundaries between literary and scientific discourses during the last two decades of the century, during which "many physicians publish[ed] in both genres, while some novelists participated in hypnotism experiments on a similar footing to medical students."[809]

Rather than examine fictional texts which directly reproduce the medical discourse of their time, however—one might call these the hypnotic *roman à idées*—this section focuses on a comparison between Maupassant, Conan Doyle and Du Maurier's fictional representations of hypnotism. Focusing on these authors—rather than on the medical novels of the time—will illuminate the ways in which fictional representations of hypnotism, rather than merely illustrate it, *reworked* medical discourse and blended it with popular conceptions, producing depictions of hypnotism whose implications reach beyond the boundaries of the medical field.

Indeed, despite their differences, the literary representations of hypnotism found in the prose texts of these authors are centered on a profound uneasiness, a mix of fear and fascination, in which the fascination for the possibilities opened up by hypnotism as a new medical and experimental object of science, and the anxieties stemming from this knowledge, coexist. As I will show, the anxieties about hypnotism then serve to represent the broader, underlying anxieties that permeate late Victorian society. Indeed, this uneasy discourse—of which the worrying descriptions of hypnosis should be considered as a symptom rather than a cause—is strategically used by all three authors, as a narrative tool to process and portray the rapid changes occurring in late nineteenth-century society, as the burgeoning science of psychology, the rise of capitalism and mass culture led to widespread—and often unconscious—fears of the Other, who suddenly threatens to intrude and penetrate into the very heart of modern subjectivity. In the three *fin-de-*

[808] As Michael Finn observes, the *fin-de-siècle* fascination for the occult held both French and British society "riveted by articles, editorials, novels, stories, medical case studies, and personal testimonials about possession and mind control … on the one hand, and of the channeling powers of 'possessed' mediums, on the other. Finn, 91.

[809] Kim Hajek, "'Je lis ça comme je lirais un roman': Reading Scientific Works on Hypnotism in Late Nineteenth-century France." *Australian Journal for French Studies* 53, no. 3 (2016): 233. As Mark Micale has noted, for example, at the end of the century, physicians "were as influenced by cultural representations and popular stereotypes as novelists and artists were about the findings of medical science." Micale, *The Mind of Modernism,* 5. Prominent journalists such as Jules Clarétie wrote columns about the subjects of the Salpêtrière and novels like *Les Amours d'un interne* (1881) and *Jean Mornas,* (1885), centered on themes of post-hypnotic suggestion and hypnotic crime.

siècle depictions that follow, hypnotism thus becomes the metaphorical equivalent of the complete (dis)possession of the subject.

2.2.1. Anxieties of (Dis)possession: Maupassant's *Le Horla*

Le Horla offers a first-person description of the main character's gradual (dis)possession, caused by an invisible, foreign and seemingly supernatural Other, whose material existence is neither fully established, nor denied in the text.[810]

Maupassant was attuned to the numerous apparently paranormal phenomena that flooded France in the 1880s, including "experiments in telepathy, apparent mind control via hypnotism and the powers of suggestion publicized by the Nancy school of hysteria studies."[811] As Vincent Kaufmann has observed, Maupassant's treatment of hypnosis in *Le Horla* is a "radical reversal" of the Balzacian perspective in *Ursule Mirouët,* stripping all religious dimension from the phenomenon.[812] Having rid the mesmeric object from its religious connotations, Maupassant—who attended Charcot's demonstrations and appreciated the work of the stage magnetists—nevertheless still relied heavily on the occult as he reworked the fascination and fears surrounding hypnosis in the 1870s and 1880s, using it as a literary means to explore a fundamental split at the heart of the human psyche.[813] As we will see in what follows, this split is thematized through the "discord and concord between the supernatural and the scientific," still found in the discourse on hypnotism at the time.[814] While on the one hand it incorporates the scientific vocabulary of Charcot and Bernheim, Maupassant's representations of hypnosis in *Le Horla* are also deeply intertwined

[810] Maupassant, *The Horla.* 1887, trans. C. Mandell (Hoboken, N.J.: Melville House Publishing, 2005). The mere attempt to describe the plot of the *Horla* already involves making an interpretative choice about the Horla's existence and the (un)reliability of the narrator. For example, Sattar describes it as "the story of a man unhinged by what he believes to be a hypnotic agency," while Liz Trueman as the narrator becoming possessed by "an invisible monster." See Atia Sattar, "Certain Madness: Guy de Maupassant and Hypnotism," 215; Liz Trueman, "Progression/ Regression" 6.

[811] Finn, *Figures of the Prefreudian Unconscious,* 97.

[812] "Balzac's medico-religious synthesis is replaced by a paradoxical medico-parapsychological, anti-religious synthesis." Vincent Kaufmann, "Le magnétisme sans le médico-religieux (Maupassant)" in *Ménage à trois. Littérature, médecine, religion* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2007), 149; 154.

[813] In his 1882 story "Magnétisme," the model is still linked to the occult connotations surrounding the practice, such as premonitions in dreams. In the text, Charcot is compared to Poe, having become mad due to excessive study of the question of madness itself. See "Magnetism," in *The Complete Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant*, ed. A. Artinian (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1955).

[814] Trueman argues that the narrator's theory of the Horla is "a cocktail of proven scientific theory with a strong twist of the persistent supernatural."[814] Liz Trueman, "Progression / Regression: Hypnotism and the Superstitious in Maupassant's *Le Horla.*" *Romance Notes* 58, no. 1 (2018): 6.

with the phenomenon of possession, and thus open up the possibility of an occultist interpretation in the text. Following Todorov's famous definition, because of the central "hesitation" on which it is constructed, Maupassant's text belongs to the genre of the fantastic, due to its central alternation between undecidable and opposing—natural vs. supernatural—explanations of the phenomenon at hand.[815] Indeed, as Laurent Dubreuil points out, the stake of the Horla is to "mobilize multiple models of possession … as long as they contradict one another, following the logic of the fantastic apparition," and hypnosis is deeply intertwined with this process of alternating between explanatory models.[816]

As Jean-Louis Cabanès has shown, the dispossession involved in Maupassant's text comes *both* from without *and* within.[817] One the one hand it is a dissolution caused by an exterior force, "the power to alienate a subject's will, to occupy his psyche, just as in a possession, demonic or otherwise"; but on the other, it can come from inside the subject himself, and reveals, as in hypnosis, "that the psyche is splitable and that the other unconscious half may rise to consciousness, replace it and occupy its space."[818] The Horla and its mysterious presence have thus been frequently described as a foreshadowing of the psychoanalytic unconscious, but as an "essentially predatory principle, which possesses the 'ego' and destroys it: pure alterity."[819] If Maupassant's novella proposes a literary "pretheory" of the unconscious, then, it is conveyed through the fictional representation of an essential hauntedness—both textual and psychological—centered on the intrusion of the Other into the realm of the self-same.[820] As Pierre Bayard argues

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[815] See for instance: "The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses of a product of the imagination—and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place it is an integral part of reality—but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us. … The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event." Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* trans. R. Howard (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 25.

[816] Dubreuil, 30. As with hypnosis, the explanatory models for the Horla are numerous and contradict each other.

[817] The name "Horla" itself is highly suggestive, phonetically connoting simultaneous internality and externality, with the French terms "hors" (outside) and "là" (here). Fundamentally indescribable, the Horla is, as Jack Abecassis notes, "a being for whom no synonym exists, and for whom the only analogy available is a deictic oxymoron, *there/here"*; in this sense, it "might be the most honest fictional title in literature." Jack Abecassis, "On Reading Maupassant's Le Horla Problematologically," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 242, no. 4 (2007): 404.

[818] Cabanès, *Le Corps et la maladie dans les récits réalistes (1856-1893)*, vol. 2. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991,) 118. In *The Horla,* the gradual (dis)possession of the subject, which culminates in the final expropriation, goes with a constant atmosphere ambiguity surrounding the question of the reality of the entity or force responsible for the possession, and a gradual shift in the process of attributing causes: from the internal space of the body or the psychological, to the external forces of the Horla or the hypnotist, back to the internal space of the human psyche.

[819] Kaufmann, "Le magnétisme sans le médico-religieux," 149.

[820] For the contention that Maupassant's text is haunted by the presence of Flaubert and his style, see Yvan Leclerc, "Maupassant: le texte hanté," in *Maupassant et l'écriture* (Paris: Nathan, 1993). In this sense, if there is a

in *Maupassant, juste avant Freud,* unlike what is seen in Freudian theory, in Maupassant's unconscious, the essential internal split is not between conscious and unconscious but rather, between Subject and Other.[821] For Bayard, the unconscious in Maupassant's work is "*indécidable*" in the same sense that the fantastic is undecidable for Todorov: like hypnosis, it constantly eludes and escapes all attempts to propose a final and complete explanation of it.

This is the context in which hypnosis intervenes in *Le Horla:* as a possible, albeit non-exhaustive, explanation for the nature and cause of the inexplicable phenomenon of the Horla, and the haunting possession that gradually overcomes the narrator's psyche. As was already the case in the literary representations of magnetism discussed at the beginning of the chapter, in *Le Horla,* the medical theory of hypnosis is put both in the service of a naturalization of the supernatural, and of the extension of the "natural" beyond its presupposed limits. Hypnosis serves as a means to conceptualize the Invisible which haunts the narrator and pushes the alternative between materialism and spiritualism, as well as between the natural and occult explanations, to their psychological breaking point. Because of the fundamentally undecidable nature of the Horla, hypnosis and suggestibility permeate the whole text and serve as a framework in which it can appear.

By representing it in relation to the occult and as a form of expropriation of the subject, Maupassant proposes a profoundly anxious treatment of hypnotism, which also participates in perpetuating popular myths and conceptions of the practice as a dangerous (dis)possession of the individual. At the same time, Maupassant's text gives a distinctly psychological dimension to the treatment of this very dispossession, and therefore also proposes its own literary conceptualization of a hypnotic unconscious, leaving the hypothesis of madness constantly open in the text.

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There are two versions of *The Horla,* published during the golden age of hypnotism in Paris. As we shall see, each version creates "a different framework for understanding the narrator's personal account of the creature Horla"—as well as "his resulting madness."[822]

Maupassantian Unconscious, it is a haunted, persecutory and fundamentally undecidable unconscious (like hypnotism itself), which manifests itself through the domain of the "psychological fantastic."

[821] Bayard, 25.

[822] Sattar, 216.

The first version of the text was published on October 16, 1886 in the newspaper *Gil Blas*; and republished in the December 9 issue of *La Vie populaire*. In this first version, which is presented as a case history, given orally by the patient to an assembly of medical doctors, the presence of hypnotism is somewhat minimal. It is mentioned as "a phenomenon far inferior to the truly supernatural" as the narrator declares to the assembly: "Everything you have been doing yourselves for the last few years, gentlemen, what you call hypnotism, suggestion, magnetism—it is he [the Horla] that you are setting the stage for, that you are prophesizing!"[823] In this 1886 version, the supernatural explains the hypnotic, rather than the other way around. The presence of the supernatural is not only introduced by also enabled by a narrative which, as Jacques Neefs observes, "clings to its introductory framework [the doctor's discourse] as to its external proof."[824]

The second, 1887 version is far more ambiguous and presented in the form of a series of diary entries, as is the case for Conan Doyle's "The Parasite." In this version, the episode about hypnosis occupies seven pages, testifying to Maupassant's developing fascination with the subject—which explains why the text has been referred to as a "vampire fathered by La Salpêtrière."[825] Rather than serve as an "objective" framework for the supernatural, here the medical discourse is filtered through the first person perspective—and writing—of the main character, whose reliability is gradually undermined as the narrative progresses. In this section, we will focus on the second version of the text, as the ambiguous status of the narrative discourse "problematizes the overarching scientific narrative of its predecessor," and thus indirectly poses the questions of hypnotic-readerly suggestibility.[826] As we shall see, in this second version, the undecidability and hiatus permeating the text spread to the narrative voice, where, as Jacques Neefs has shown, "the unrepresentable appears to the subject of representation himself."[827] In this way, we will see how Maupassant's representation of the Horla and of hypnosis impose "another additional turn of the screw … onto the question of the relations between representation and reality," while dramatizing the eruption of the Other and of the irrational into ordinary consciousness.

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[823] Maupassant, *Le Horla,* 1886 edition (Hoboken: Melville House, 2005), 73.
[824] Jacques Neefs, "La représentation fantastique dans 'Le Horla' de Maupassant," *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 32 (1980): 234.
[825] Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychoanalyse en France* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 76.
[826] Sattar, 222.
[827] Neefs, "La représentation fantastique dans 'Le Horla' de Maupassant," 234.

2.2.1.1. From Familiarity to (Dis)Possession

Maupassant's text opens with an almost exaggerated emphasis on self-possession, on what Jacques Neefs calls "the stability of an orientation."[828] Indeed, the narrator's first diary entry contains a suspiciously enthusiastic evocation of a sense of belonging, rooted in the familiarity and comfort of his immediate environment:

> What a wonderful day! I spent all morning stretched out on the grass in front of my house, beneath the huge plane tree that completely covers, shelters, and shades the lawn. I love the country here, and I love living here because this is where I have my roots, those profound and delicate roots that attach a man to the land where his ancestors were born and died. … I love my house, I grew up in it. From my windows, I can see the Seine flowing along the whole length of my garden, behind the road, almost in my back yard.[829]

This image of a familiar, peaceful landscape—both physical and mental—which has not yet become *unheimlich,* culminates in the metaphor of rootedness: of being at home both in the land of one's "ancestors" and in one's own "house"—a physical space which since Freud has become associated with the Ego, its psychical equivalent. By setting up this solid foundation—based on the self-mastery that comes with being at home in oneself—the text sets the stage for its deconstruction, as the narrator's sense of self-possession gradually breaks down, before shattering into pieces.

In fact, one might argue that this apparent solidity is undermined from the start. For instance, Jack Abecassis describes the narrator's suspicious sense of familiarity as "a particular identity-fantasy of an existence free of questioning," which is "so emphatically and repeatedly" asserted that it must already be part of his "symptom."[830] Indeed, as the metaphor of rootedness keeps the narrator sheltered against the intrusion of the Other, "this very identity is precisely the symptom of what is about to dissolve."[831]

Regardless of the exact moment of its initial occurrence, the disruption of the ordinary appears early on in the text and is submitted to a constant alternation between competing explanatory hypotheses.

The initial explanatory framework is of a physiological nature, as the narrator suspects he suffers from an unknown disease. Medical vocabulary of nervous disorders and unknown

[828] Neefs, Ibid., 238.
[829] Maupassant, *Le Horla* (1887; Hoboken: Melville House, 2005), 3.
[830] Abecassis, 399.
[831] Ibid., 399.

conditions keep the text's explanation on a material, organic level.[832] However, once the hypothesis of physical disease is no longer satisfactory, the process of "dematerialization" begins, as possible explanations switch to the psychological level: "Suddenly I was seized by a shiver, but not of cold—a strange shiver of anxiety"; "Frightened for no reason, stupidly, *because of the profound solitude*"; "when we are alone for a long time, we people the void with phantoms."[833]

In parallel to this shift toward the psychological, a process of exteriorization is put in place, as the narrator begins to suspect the existence of a presence outside himself: "All of a sudden, it seems to me I was being followed, that someone was walking *just behind me, very close, very close.*"[834] As Jacques Neefs has shown, this gradual personification of the Horla underlines fiction's ability to turn the metaphorical question of identity—or the immaterial presence of the unconscious—into a concrete reality: "Fictional production will unfold, into a quasi-character, the interrogative doubling; the realist application of what here is still metaphorical, leads to the neighboring presence of this 'Invisible' which governs me."[835]

As the story unfolds, this processes of exteriorization and personalization results in descriptions where the supernatural and demonic explanations seem to have replaced the psychological ones, as in the image of the vampire: "Last night, I felt someone squatting over me, who, with his mouth over mine, was drinking in my life through my lips. Yes, he was sucking it in from my throat, just like a leech."[836] As Atia Sattar notes, here "the terrorizing someone now reveals itself as a predator, no longer simply close but upon him, consuming his very being."[837]

In other passages however, the text radically reverts to more psychological explanations. In this context, madness and hypnosis, which both allow for the continuation of mental activity while the conscious, rational self is—supposedly—absent or incapacitated, are the two main available explanations. These psychological hypotheses go hand in hand with an *internalization* that complicate the idea of an exterior possession: "Someone must have drunk this water. Who?

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[832] For instance: "a shiver of cold that … has affected my nerves"; "a feverish nervous exhaustion"; "a sickness still unknown germinating in the blood and the flesh"; "my nerves vibrating, but without any alarming symptom"; "a circulatory disorder perhaps, an irritated nerve ending … a tiny perturbation in the all too imperfect and delicate functioning of our living mechanism," Maupassant, 5-7.
[833] Ibid., 8, emphasis added; 16.
[834] Ibid., 8-9. Here the pronoun "someone" personalizes the Horla, suggesting an unidentified presence, another identity, both exterior yet too close to the subject to be entirely foreign, the link between proximity and identity being further strengthened by the repetition "very close."
[835] Neefs, "La représentation fantastique dans 'Le Horla' de Maupassant," 242.
[836] Maupassant, *Le Horla,* 12.
[837] Sattar, 227.

Me? It must be me*;* it could only be me"; "someone drank the entire content of my carafe last night—or rather, I drank it."[838]

Unlike madness, however, the hypothesis of hypnosis is especially valuable on a narrative level, as it combines into a single phenomenon the binaries that are opposed in other explanations. For instance, it combines the notion of a somnambulistic trance state (internal), and of possession by another mind (external). As a form of scientific discourse, it also keeps the Horla confined to the realm of the natural—thereby asserting its existence—while stretching the boundaries of the rational and scientific to their limits. Finally, it allows for a "lucid" form of madness, during which the subject is both awake, and dispossessed.[839]

This is especially fitting with the moments in which the narrator remains "awake" despite the presence of the Horla—which corresponds more accurately with historical descriptions of trance states than the possession model: "I am fully aware that I am lying down and sleeping."[840] Such moments of "lucid sleep" are also chronologically juxtaposed with visual "hallucinations" such as the book page turning, and with certain actions, such as drinking the water and the milk, whose author remains unknown and are followed by a complete absence of recollection and are thus reminiscent of post-hypnotic amnesia.

Furthermore, even before an explicit mention of hypnotic suggestion in the text, the association between a *lucid* form of madness and the hypnotic state is reinforced by the comparison to dreams, in which the rational faculties are "asleep" but the mind's activity continues:

> Surely, I would think myself crazy, absolutely crazy, if I weren't *aware* of my condition … So I am in fact just a rational person suffering from hallucinations … This distress has established a profound *divide in my mind* … Similar phenomena occur in dreams, which parade us through the most implausible phantasmagoria without our being surprised, since the verifying apparatus, the sense of control, is asleep, while the imaginative faculty is awake and at work.[841]

[838] Maupassant, 13; 14.
[839] Significantly, descriptions of sleep often precede or follow the inexplicable "supernatural" events in the text, and share strong similarities with hypnotic or magnetic sleep: "the invincible sleep seized me"; "I suddenly fall into repose, the way one drowns oneself, dropping into an abyss … I don't feel it coming, this treacherous sleep … that lies in wait for me, that is about to seize me by the head, close my eyes." Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 15; 7.
[840] Ibid., 7.
[841] Ibid., 26.

As Pierre Bayard has shown, the "Other" in Maupassant appears to the *conscious* mind. As in hypnosis, it manifests itself directly in the narrator's body and thoughts, rather than being held under the surface of repression.[842]

Hypnosis is then explicitly mentioned by the narrator as a possible explanation for the manifestations of the Horla. In some instances, the model is that of automatism and somnambulism: "I must have been the plaything of my exhausted imagination, unless *I am actually a sleepwalker*, or have undergone one of those influences, which have been observed but are yet to be explained, that are called 'suggestive'."[843] In other passages, the more radical model of dual personality is evoked, where the hypnotic state is characterized by a complete obliteration of the conscious self, followed by amnesia:

> So I was a sleepwalker, then, and was living, without knowing it, this *double* mysterious life, which makes us suspect that there are *two beings* inside us, or that a foreign being, unknowable and invisible, animates our captive body *when our soul is dulled.*[844]

In this type of explanation, hypnosis is blended with demonic possession, conceived as the literal invasion and replacement of one mind by another, the subject finding himself in a state of complete passivity and helplessness: "our body obeys this other being as it does ourselves, or obeys it more than ourselves."[845]

2.2.1.2. The Natural and the Supernatural

In an 1886 issue of *Les Lettres et les Arts*, Dr. J Renaut writes:

> These days hypnotism is all that is left of sorcery. ... In fact, the basic element it consists of is the strange notion of possession... In certain situations, a man acquires absolute power over another man, such that he can plunge him at will into a death-like sleep. He then wakes him from it as he wishes, whether to make him motionless like a statue, or to make him into an automaton who will obey his every whim. ... The subject then becomes truly possessed.[846]

[842] This is why for Bayard, Maupassant's model is one of hallucination—which threatens identity—rather than repression, which in a sense, preserves balance. See *Maupassant juste avant Freud,* 30.
[843] Maupassant, 15, emphasis added.
[844] Ibid., 13-14, emphasis added.
[845] Ibid., 13
[846] J Renaut, "L'Hypnotisme," *Les Lettres et les Arts* (August 1886): 160.

As we will see in this section, Maupassant's representation of hypnosis in *Le Horla* oscillates between demonic possession at one end of the spectrum, and as "an emerging scientific rationalization for the Other," a naturalization of the occult, on the other end.[847]

A Naturalization of the Occult

Indeed, in the central episode involving hypnotism—where the narrator's cousin, Mme Sablé, is put under a state of somnambulism by Dr. Parent—a vocabulary reminiscent of Bernheim's establishes hypnosis as a scientific explanation, casting doubt on the supernatural descriptions discussed higher up, before blending it with possession altogether. [848]

In this central episode, the text first establishes the "reality" and "scientific" dimension of hypnotism through the presence and authority of Dr. Parent, whose legitimacy "appears incontrovertible in the opinion of the narrator."[849] Unlike Flaubert's Dr. Vaucorbeil, who condemned hypnosis for its dangerous and morally or politically subversive potential, Dr. Parent practices hypnotism himself and spends "much of his time studying nervous illnesses."[850] As he both fascinates *and* explains, his authority is twofold: it is that of both medical knowledge and magnetic power concentrated in a single character.

In the discourse of the Dr. Parent, scientific authority allows to criticize the superstitions of the past while legitimizing the "reality" of an invisible hypnotic force, which—like the Horla—has the power to penetrate and act upon another's mind. One of the functions of Dr. Parent as a character is also to participate in the medical debate of the 1880s and criticize the doctrines of la Salpêtrière, which Parent refers to "the incredible results obtained by English scholars and by doctors in the Nancy school" and proposes a demonstration involving post-hypnotic suggestion, rather than the reproduction of hysteric symptoms.[851]

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[847] Sattar, 235.

[848] In this episode, all skeptical characters, including the narrator himself, are convinced of the "truth" of hypnosis. Once in the hypnotic state, Mme Sablé demonstrates clairvoyant abilities (she can see images in a blank business-card as if it were a mirror), and carries out a post-hypnotic suggestion the next day (asking to borrow 5000 francs from the narrator), of which she remembers nothing. In brief, Maupassant's text reproduces a classic scene of somnambulism and the effects expected of it in the nineteenth century. See *Le Horla,* 17-20.

[849] Trueman, 12.

[850] Maupassant, 17.

[851] Ibid., 17. Nevertheless, critics disagree on whether the Dr. Parent is modeled on Charcot or Bernheim or Janet. On the one hand, Liz Truman claims that the mirror-image scene is inspired by the work of Alfred Binet at the Salpêtrière. For her, the business-card episode is "an almost exact description" of an experiment performed and published by Binet in 1884 in *La Revue Philosophique*, where he describes "hypnotizing subjects to 'hallucinate images on a blank piece of card' [*un carton blanc*]," as well as "the faithful interaction of the subject with the hallucination and its lifelike

The clearest passage in which hypnosis is used as a naturalization of the occult is Dr. Parent's monologue, which links hypnotism to scientific progress, and reveals it as a conceptual tool which can be used to explain supernatural phenomena, superstition and religion alike. In this way, hypnosis is portrayed as a tool for Enlightenment ideals and a means of providing rational explanation of the secrets of nature—of the invisible, incomprehensible, natural fact:

> "We are," he asserted, "on the verge of discovering one of the most important secrets of nature, I mean one off its most important secrets on this earth, for nature must have far more important ones, up there, in the stars. Ever since man has thought … he has felt touched by a mystery impenetrable to his coarse and imperfect senses, and he has tried, by the effort of his intelligence) to compensate for the powerlessness of his organs. When this intelligence was still in its rudimentary state, this haunting by invisible phenomena took frightening forms of the most commonplace kind. Hence popular beliefs in the supernatural were born, legends of wandering spirits, fairies, gnomes, ghosts, I will even say the legend of God. … But for a little more than a century there has been a presentiment of something new. Mesmer and a few others have put us on an unexpected track, and we have truly arrived, especially in the last four or five years, at surprising results.[852]

Further down, the idea is repeated:

> He has come, the One the primal terrors of primitive tribes dreaded, the One anxious priests exorcised … After the coarse imaginings of primitive horror, more perspicacious men had a clearer presentiment of him. Mesmer guessed his existence, and for ten years now doctors have discovered, in an accurate way, the nature of his power.[853]

Not only does hypnosis offer a possible explanation for the nature of the experience of the Horla, it offers a secularization of what both religious and "primitive" beliefs attributed to the supernatural: it "taps the secret power at the root of all of these superstitions."[854]

The Reality of the Invisible: Maupassant's Supernaturalism

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conformity to the physical properties of a real image on a card."[851] Michael Finn on the other hand argues that the scene with Mme Sablé resembles Janet's experiments on clairvoyance with Léonie: "I wanted [Léonie] to describe photos she could not see but which I was holding in my hands. I realized that she described them just as well when I wasn't familiar with them as when I was. Seven times she indicated exactly which photo I had touched before anyone else had seen." For Finn, Maupassant's text proposes "a reorientation away from Salpêtrière teachings and, instead, an opening both to theories and practices emanating from the Nancy school." Finn, 77-78. See also Janet's 1886 articles, discussed in Chapter 1: "Notes sur quelques phénomènes de somnambulisme," 198 and "Deuxième note sur le sommeil provoqué à distance," 212–23. Indeed, when in Maupassant's text, Dr. Parent mentions "experiments on hypnotism and *suggestion,"* the emphasis on suggestion—rather than hysteria, pathology or neurosis—recalls Bernheim's conception of hypnosis as a natural state that can be induced in any individual. Maupassant, *Le Horla,* 17. Sattar even goes as far as arguing that "Charcot was so well aware of the author's antagonism toward him that he had Maupassant banned from his Tuesday lectures after the publication of *The Horla*, when Maupassant also began to manifest behavioral problems on account of his syphilis." Sattar, 235.

[852] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 18.

[853] Ibid., 34.

[854] Trueman, 12.

Nevertheless, because of the fundamental undecidability that characterizes both hypnosis and the Horla, this naturalization of the occult alternates with a seemingly opposed movement, where the texts establishes its adherence to the reality of invisible phenomena.

For instance, the description of Mms Sablé acting out the Dr. Parent's post-hypnotic suggestion allows the narrative to oscillate back towards the occult by framing hypnotic rapport in terms of absolute domination: *"*this weapon … the domination of a mysterious will over a human soul, which turns into a slave. They called it 'magnetism,' 'hypnotism,' 'suggestion'."[855] The grouping of these three concepts into a single category reinforces the impression of a single, dangerous phenomenon, cancelling out the nuances which were familiar to practitioners and theoreticians of the time—and no doubt to Maupassant himself, who is said to have attended Charcot's Tuesday Lectures.[856] Indeed, as Laurent Dubreuil has shown, in Maupassant's fictional representation, "the possessed is not struggling against his unconscious but against the negation of his own will (conscious and/or unconscious) and its replacement by another. The magnetized subject no longer has access to the pure experiences of wokeness, sleep and dreams. When he stands, when he believes he lives for himself, he sleeps, subjugated by his master."[857] In other words, even in the episode that medically establishes the "truth" of hypnosis, the latter is reworked so as to incorporate the absolute domination and enslavement pertaining to the occult phenomenon of demonic possession.

In fact, in "Un Fou?"—a 1884 short story considered as an early version of *Le Horla*—hypnotism is denounced by another character named Parent, as a horrific violation of the subject by the operator, a stealth of the soul:

> A man, a being has the frightful and incomprehensible power of putting another being to sleep by the power of his will, and while he is asleep, of robbing him of his thoughts—that is to say, his soul, his sanctuary, the secret of the ego, that impenetrable secret of man, that fountain of inexpressible ideas. He can rob him of everything he hides, of everything he loves. He opens his sanctuary, violates it, displays it, gives it to the public! Is this not atrocious, criminal, infamous?[858]

This fear of hypnotism is confirmed when the narrator of *the Horla* compares his own possession to Mme Sablé's hypnotic experience:

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[855] Maupassant, 34.
[856] Michael Finn has argued that despite the numerous indirect sources we have of Maupassant presence at Charcot's lectures, such as the testimonies of Léon Daudet and Axel Munthe, all that "we do know" is that "Maupassant consulted Charcot about his eye problems in April 1886." Finn, *Figures of the Pre-Freudian Unconscious,* 76-77.
[857] Laurent Dubreuil, *De l'attrait à la possession: Maupassant, Artaud, Blanchot* (Paris: Hermann, 2003), 59.
[858] Maupassant, "Un fou," *Le Figaro* (September 1, 1884), 259.

> Surely this is how my poor cousin was possessed and dominated when she came to borrow five thousand francs from me. She was undergoing a strange will that had entered her, like another soul, like a parasitic and dominating soul. Is the world about to end? But the one that is governing me, what is it, this invisible thing?[859]

Here, the hypnotist (or the doctor) becomes as dangerous as the Horla himself: "For the hypnotizer or the Horla, the power is the same: to put the subject to sleep, to paralyze his/her body and his/her volition by displacing the energies and self-appropriating them."[860] By paralleling his condition with that of his cousin, the narrator "applies the language of his own distress" to the magnetic influences that subjected his cousin,[861] and begins to portray himself as an increasingly passive, helpless figure: "I have lost all strength, all courage, all self- control, even all power to put my will in motion. I can no longer want anything; but someone wants for me; and I obey."[862] By this point in the narrative, the narrator's autonomy is reduced to pure spectatorship and passivity, as he has "subsumed the efficacy of hypnotism into that of diabolical control."[863] Unlike the hypothesis of madness (to which we shall return) the function of hypnosis in the text is not point to the delusion of the main character, but to his possession.

In asserting the power of one mind over another, hypnosis establishes the possibility of the *reality* of invisible forces which elude ordinary human perception. In doing so, under the apparent return to the occult, it also participates in a general extension of the domain of the natural, in the service of Maupassant's "supernaturalism," by which, as he writes in "Letter of a Madman," the supernatural is "nothing other than what remains veiled to us."[864]

For example, when the character meets the monk during his trip to the Mont Saint Michel, the example used to prove the existence of "other beings exist besides us on Earth" is taken from Nature,[865] as the monk evokes the example of the wind to justify his argument about the "super"-natural:

> Do we see the hundred-hundred-thousandth parts of what exists? Look, here is the wind, which is the strongest force in nature, which knocks men down, destroys buildings, uproots trees, whips the sea up into mountains of water and throws great ships onto the shoals; here is the wind that kills, whistles, groans, howls—have you ever seen it, and can you see it? Yes it exists.[866]

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[859] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 29.
[860] Micheline Besnard-Coursodon, "Une 'Chaise basse en crepe de Chine': Sommeils Maupassantiens." *Romantisme* 37 (1982): 46.
[861] Sattar, 236.
[862] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 28. Similarly, the next entry states: "I am lost. Someone possesses my soul and governs it. Someone controls all my actions, all my movements, all my thoughts. I am nothing inside, nothing but a slave spectator." Ibid., 29.
[863] Sattar, 237.
[864] Maupassant, "Letter From a Madman," trans. C. Mandell (Hoboken, N.J.: Melville House Publishing, 2005), 54.
[865] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 11.
[866] Ibid., 11-12.

In this passage, the personification of the wind helps bridge the gap between the idea of invisible "forces" one the one hand, and invisible "beings" on the other—a leap that the Flaubertian narrator would not leave unnoticed.[867] In the first version of *The Horla*, a similar idea is evoked, albeit with a different example:

> Can you see electricity? And yet it exists! This being, which I have named the Horla, also exists. … For centuries, we have had a foreboding of him, we have dreaded him and foretold him! The fear of the Invisible always haunted our ancestors … he is the one of whom an already anxious and trembling humanity had some premonition. And everything you yourselves have been doing, gentlemen, in recent years, what you call 'hypnotism,' 'suggestion,' 'magnetism'—it is he you are heralding and prophesying![868]

It is important to note that in these examples, the imperfection of the sensory organs is what explains the lack of belief in the existence of the supernatural. Were our sensory organs subtler and more acute, the perception of the Invisible would be made possible. Just as the unknown or unknowable is redefined as "as of yet unknown," the imperceptible in Maupassant is reframed as "as of yet unperceived," a process which, as Finn notes, underlines Maupassant's "obsessional longing" for physical explanations of the immaterial."[869]

Like the wind, electricity and the Horla, hypnosis itself is a manifestation of the "reality" of the "invisible." As Laurent Dubreuil has noted, it allows us to perceive the imperceptible, by maintaining it in a "transparent opacity":

> No more of the dusty, old, exaggerated supernatural. Instead, an anti-natural supernature, which transcends naive and primitive beliefs and the initial rationalist interpretations alike … beyond naturalism and its scientist pretensions [*prétentions scientistes*].[870]

Madness: The Only Way Out?

As Jacques Neefs writes, the fantastic genre allows fiction to draw the boundaries of what we call "reality."[871] In Maupassant, the "reality" of the Invisible triggers both a scientific quest to explain, *and* an ultimate failure of scientific discourse, which leads the text to build up a greater

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[867] The example relies on the fact that invisibility here serves as a metaphor for imperceptibility and immateriality in general: if the invisible has physical effects in the world, then *other* immaterial and imperceptible forces can likely affect our material world, beyond what is suggested to us by the limitations of ordinary perception.
[868] Maupassant, *Le Horla*. 1886 version, 73.
[869] Finn, 90. For Finn, this pulls Maupassant back toward the spiritualist side, making him "a faithful creature of his age, for in this same period a broad swath of spiritualists and some scientists were trying to imagine psychic phenomena as poorly understood extensions of the physical.
[870] Dubreuil, 27-29.
[871] "The affirmation of reality which characterizes nineteenth century fantastic texts (with their protocols of authentication, of experimental science, of scientific and informed interrogation) proceeds by slyly tracing the demarcations, the knowable limits, the guarantees of the subject, the extension of Reality." Neefs, "La représentation fantastique dans 'Le Horla' de Maupassant," 232.

and greater ambiguity, only resolvable to the modern, post-Freudian reader, on a psychological level.

In his quest to understand and *observe* the existence of the Horla, Maupassant's character begins by conducting a series of "scientific" observations and experiments in order to determine whether there can "emerge a scientifically proven *someone*, positively identifiable through scientific means of investigation."[872] Nevertheless, as we have seen in the various works examined so far, while such investigations provide observations of its effects—liquids being drunk, food eaten, cups broken, reflections in the mirror disappearing, and so on—they fail to provide sufficient explanations of its *cause.*[873] The narrator—and reader—is forced to merely observe the traces of, rather than *understand,* his object of observation. By the end of the story—as in Balzac and Flaubert—scientific discourse is unable to provide a satisfactory and total explanation of the phenomenon in question, which resists all attempts at normalization.

Atia Sattar argues that this absence of a discourse capable of providing a satisfactory explanation leaves madness as the only option for the narrator.[874] Conversely, the medical perspective being unable to produce a sufficient explanation, it has no choice but to relegate the inexplicable to the domain of madness.[875]

This hypothesis of madness is suggested in numerous passages in the text, where the narrator grows increasing skeptical towards his own sanity and ability to think rationally: "*July 6.* I am going mad"; "*July 10.* Without a doubt, I am mad! And yet…"; "doubts about my reason came to me, not vague doubts as I have had but precise, absolute doubts."[876] This uncertainty is reinforced by the first-person form of the diary entries, where, without an "objective" third person—or medical authority as in the first version of the text—to rely on, the progress of the

[872] Sattar, 228. The narrator does so by laying out food, drink, and chalk for the Horla to consume or spread during the night.
[873] Sattar goes one step further, in contending that all scientific attempts to explain fail in the text: "He hopelessly scrambles to rationalize a presence that, although discernible through the means of empirical observation and experimentation, cannot, in fact, be explained by science." Sattar, 229.
[874] "Similarly deceived and deprived of a scientific solution, the narrator finds himself at the brink of insanity—or perhaps chooses insanity as a definable solution"; the narrator's experience "remain[ing] undecipherable in the domain of scientific expertise, is explicable only in terms of madness." Sattar, 230; 215.
[875] Indeed, the medical figures "rationalize their encounters with the supernatural by relegating whatever the scientific discipline cannot elucidate to the realm of madness." See Gwenhaël Ponnau, *La folie dans la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1987), 98.
[876] Maupassant, *Le Horla,* 14; 26.

narrator's "madness" goes hand in hand with his gradual dispossession by the Horla.[877] And indeed, as Rae Gordon puts it, "what creates the Fantastic, what is indeed terrible at the present moment is not the phantom, the supernatural being, but rather the experience of mental alienation."[878]

Hypnosis, from this perspective, can be thought to intervene in a second sense in the text, beyond the mere naturalization of the occult. Indeed, it helps reveal the psychological dimension of the narrator's haunting, and move the object of inquiry from the external to the internal, from the material/immaterial divide to the conscious/unconscious. It shows that the threat that seemed to be exterior is in fact haunting us from within. Indeed, as Jack Abecassis has shown, hypnosis reveals that "the [exterior] solutions the narrator has been seeking by means of distancing and quarantining the phenomenon … are futile, for the real question and the real answer are interior to and constitutive of our psyche, threatening our crude identity when it lets down its guard."[879]

Beyond the question of its scientific legitimacy, then, hypnosis also manifests the "late nineteenth-century incipient recognition of the limits of a strictly rational, positivist and mechanistically empirical understanding of mental processes," in favor of the recognition of the "invisible forces," which as Jack Abecassis puts it, can now be understood as manifestations, not of ghosts, but of "the unconscious and irrational dimensions of the real."[880]

Nevertheless, as noted previously, this unconscious is not pre-Freudian but rather, a "hypnotic" unconscious, centered on an essential duality or split at the heart of identity.[881] For Pierre Bayard, in Maupassant, the Unconscious is "not just an unknown object or thematic content," but is:

> What constantly shows itself, in an excess of visibility or perception, in the sudden emergence [*surgissement*]... of the Other in the self, or the self in the other, an emergence which questions us, down to the deepest roots of our identity. Who is this Other in me? Who *am I* in the face of what overwhelms me? [*bouleverse*].[882]

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[877] As Jacques Neefs has noted, "the alterity of the Horla, increasingly present in the text, feeds off of discursive solitude, of subjective confinement… The inaugural gesture of a will [to explain, and thus to possess oneself] turns into the proof of dispossession." Neefs, 236.
[878] Gordon, "'Le Merveilleux scientifique' and the Fantastic," 20.
[879] Abecassis, "On Reading Maupassant's *Le Horla* Problematologically," 409.
[880] Ibid., 409.
[881] The threat of splitting, dissociation, annihilation of the self, were all are intimately linked with the questions raised by hypnosis at the end of the century, especially in the work of Janet. As Michael Finn has noted, "Maupassant's mind is haunted by an undecidability that is person-related … The anguish of many of his works stems from an inability to be sure of identity. Undecidability and duality are thus the unconscious embedded in the writer's style. Finn, 96.
[882] Bayard, 82. It is also "the way in which discourse disposes itself in relation to what overwhelms [*dépasse*] and threatens it." Ibid., 27

This undecidability as to the limits and interchangeability between self and other goes with a gradual and increasing dissolution of the sense of self in the text. In fact, by the end of the story, the subject is so split that it is disintegrating. In this sense, identity, as the fundamental and ungraspable object of The *Horla,* cannot but drive one to madness—"*Un objet qui rend fou.*"[883]

For Bayard, "facing these contradictory, and thus unbearable representations, the subject must act."[884] The narrator's final act of despair—the decision to burn down his house to destroy the Horla—becomes his only way out, the only possibility of liberation or relief.[885] Therefore, at the end of the story, the identity-fantasy of the beginning of the text—the familiarity of the landscape and psychic home—is completely destroyed and overturned.

On the other hand, the final act also—and finally—marks, beyond the tragedy of splitting, the painful *integration* or internalization of the Horla into the "I," putting an end to the maddening dissociation in the text's closing sentence: "NO… no… of course not… of course he is not dead…. *So then—it's me*, it's me I have to kill!"[886] In this final insight, horror culminates as the Horla violently merges into the concept of "me," putting an end to the destructive alternation between the exterior vs. interior hypotheses.[887]

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In Maupassant's anxious representation, hypnosis is a conceptual tool that allows to give form to the haunting emergence of the "Other," a means both experiential and theoretical to propose a "pretheory" of the psychical unconscious, based on a fundamental undecidability and

[883] Ibid., 180.
[884] Ibid., 181. Bayard comments on the relevance of the English expression "acting out," as he conceives this act as a means of "escaping" and "exiting" the self ("*une sortie de soi*"). Ibid.
[885] This act is in this respect comparable to Mario's shooting of Cipolla in Thomas Mann's *Mario and the Magician.* Jack Abecassis describes it as "a metaphor of loss of identity and an explicit descent into psychotic chaos." Abecassis, 400.
[886] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 43, emphasis added.
[887] From a Kleinian perspective, this could be read as a move from the paranoid schizoid to the pain of the depressive position, but the ending of the text and the mention of suicide maintain the ambiguity until the end. Nevertheless, the final act does mark the appearance of one last—tragic—certitude, that of human finitude. The uncertainty which characterizes the Horla's materiality (and thus its "material" death at the end of the text) is what leads the narrator towards suicide. If there is one thing that he cannot doubt however, even at the end of the text, it is his own materiality, his own bodily nature, his mortality. Even if he is subject to the torture of a Maupassantian evil genius, and is a victim of hypnotic hallucinations, suggestions, absolute madness, complete destruction of the ego, he is mortal.

revealing the dynamics of possession and dispossession, of splitting and dissolution of the subject.[888]

As we saw, Maupassant's text multiplies possible yet seemingly incompatible interpretations—hypnotism, madness, the supernatural—and manages to posit "in unthinkable juxtaposition with medical diagnosis the absolute possibility of a diabolical Other."[889]

If from an epistemological point of view, hypnosis is still an in-between or a material/immaterial-undecidable, it is an efficient concept which allows to think the impossible binaries of the text such as the visible-invisible, the opaque-transparency, the real-hallucination of the Horla. Unlike the hypothesis of madness, monomania, hallucination, or psychosis, the hypothesis of hypnotic suggestion allows the text to preserve the *reality* of possession, in a naturalized-supernaturalist paradigm that extends beyond purely occultist interpretations. Indeed, "whereas science is often… in apparent opposition to the supernatural, it is in fact their similarities that fascinate de Maupassant."[890]

In the end, the text prevents any interpretation from emerging as *final* or *total.* In Maupassant's story, scientific discourse, with its various attempts to confine reality to the reassuring boundaries of concepts and language, fails to permanently remove anxiety and doubts. Even hypnosis, despite its role as a naturalization of the supernatural, is far from being able to *settle* the question of identity. On the contrary, as a secular form of demonic possession, it participates in its unsettling.

Unlike scientific discourse, the power of literature, on the other hand, lies in its inclusive ability to refuse to choose between competing models. As Jacques Neefs has shown, this openness was already that of the Flaubertian (and Balzacian) texts, and as we have argued, is inevitable when confronting the undecidability of the hypnotic object. In this sense, one diary entry in *The Horla* in this sense is especially illuminating: "July 19.—Many people to whom I have told the adventure have laughed at me. I no longer know what to think. The wise man says: Perhaps?"[891]

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[888] Bayard argues that the unconscious in Maupassant is "indécidable" in the same sense as the fantastic is for Todorov. Bayard, 24.
[889] Sattar, 241.
[890] Rae Beth Gordon, "'Le Merveilleux scientifique' and the Fantastic," *L'Esprit Créateur* 28, no. 3, Theories of the Fantastic (Fall 1988): 20.
[891] Maupassant, *Le Horla*, 23.

2.2.2. Fear of Contamination: Conan Doyle's *The Parasite*

As Hilary Grimes has noted, by the 1880s and 1890s, works like *Trilby, Dracula, The Beetle*, and *The Parasite* were "surging with the Gothic horror of the trance, not with friendly exchanges of power."[892] This fascination for the perils of trance states points to a dual ambition in both Francophone and Anglophone worlds: of "trying to safely contain the dangers of mesmerism and hypnotism within the fixity of print, while simultaneously delighting in the creative possibilities trance states offered."[893]

In late Victorian Britain however, rather than reproduce the experimental rigor of Parisian medical circles, representations of hypnotism were strongly influenced by the Society of Psychical Research and the spiritualist phenomena which interested its members.[894] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle can be counted among the authors whose fictional treatment of hypnosis pulled it toward the spiritual side. Indeed, Doyle became a member of the Society for Psychical Research in 1891 and announced his "conversion" to spiritualism in 1916, in what many perceived as the great aberration of his life.[895] Among other topics pertaining to his spiritualist interests, Doyle "clearly believed" in the powers of post-hypnotic suggestion, which he uses in *The Parasite* as a gothic trope to "explore human identity."[896] In an unpublished essay quoted by Pierre Nordon, Doyle poses questions about the ubiquity of suggestion reminiscent of the Bernheimian thesis, with which he was familiar: "How can we tell that all our actions are not of this nature? What appears to us to be

[892] Hilary Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic: Mental Science, the Uncanny, and Scenes of Writing* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 79. See Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Parasite* (Harper Bros: New York, 1895).
[893] Grimes, Ibid., 79.
[894] The Society was founded in February 1882, to investigate phenomena ranging from hypnosis and dissociation, to parapsychological and paranormal phenomena such as mediumship, thought transference, apparitions, and so on, with Henry Sidgwick at its head. Among its most famous members were Frederic Myers, William James and Charles Richet. Doyle resigned from it in 1930.
[895] Indeed, numerous biographers attempted to tone down Doyle's interest in spiritualism—a "seeming anachronism in an otherwise respectable life," that sharply contrasts with the "super-rationalism" of Sherlock Holmes. See Alex Owen. "'Borderland Forms': Arthur Conan Doyle, Albion's Daughters, and the Politics of the Cottingley Fairies." *History Workshop* 38 (1994): 67.
[896] Owen, Ibid, 49. As stated in the Portsmouth *Evening News* (in which Doyle also wrote), as early as 1889, he volunteered to be part of a hypnosis demonstration attended by "twenty thirty medical and scientific men and journalist of Portsmouth," performed by a professor named Milo de Meyer. The professor's attempt to hypnotize Doyle—which consisted in a mixture of ocular fascination, old mesmeric passes, and a "new" technique consisting in "standing behind his subject and placing his hand on the latter's coat, at a point between the shoulder blades"—"failed, the Professor remarking, after making the attempt, that the process would take too long." See "Hypnotism at Southsea," *The Evening News* (9 February 1889).

our own choice may prove really to have been as unalterable and inexorable as fate—the unavoidable sum total of suggestions which are acting upon us."[897]

Doyle's treatment of hypnosis, however, is heavily focused on its dangers, rather than its therapeutic potential. As noted in Chapter 1, *fin-de-siècle* discussions of crimes committed under hypnosis greatly impacted popular fiction and the press, and representations of hypnosis allowed to voice a series of late Victorian anxieties about social, economic, and political "invasions" of all sorts. In Doyle's *The Parasite*, concerns about the dangers of posthypnotic suggestions and hypnotic trance are thematized as the threat of a parasitic unconscious which is both "exotic" and erotic. Indeed, the narrator's anxieties about contamination have a double object. On the one hand, they concern the *female* Other and the "irresistible" force of sexual desire. On the other hand, they concern the *foreign* Other, who threatens Victorian British identity with invasion and degeneracy, with literal and metaphorical infiltration and infection, as in a return of repressed colonial guilt. In Doyle's story, these "threats" creep up gradually into the mind and life of the narrator, who experiences—and projects—them as *exterior* because of their incompatibility with bourgeois moral values and his form of life as a rationalist, philosophically materialist, professor of physiology.

Although for Professor Gilroy, scientific inquiry is the means to "combat foreign, even 'demonic' threats of degeneration and racial pollution, often associated with the colonized," his method ultimately fails and leads to his downfall.[898] Indeed, while scientific methodology is initially used to guarantee the rigor of his exploration of hypnosis—as well as the text's—it backfires, so to speak, leading to Gilroy's scientific "conversion" from skepticism to mesmerism, and from thereon, to his gradual loss of control and acknowledgment of the horrors of psychical "contamination."

Therefore, while Balzac's treatment of hypnotism was based on the notion of subversion, Poe's on that of suspension, and Maupassant's on splitting and (dis)possession, in Conan Doyle's 1894 novella, it is centered on the notions of invasion and contamination. Nevertheless, as we shall see, while perpetuating gender and racial stereotypes of the time, Doyle's tale also constitutes an exception in *fin-de-siècle* gothic or late Victorian representations of mesmerism as it inverts the

[897] Doyle, in Pierre Nordon, *Conan Doyle* (London: John Murray, 1966), 151.
[898] Laura Habbe, "The Horrors of Scientific Investigation: Parasitic Mesmerism in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Parasite*," *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Stories* 14 (Summer 2015): 49.

usual gender roles and dynamics of power operating in medical and stage hypnosis alike, by portraying a female, lay hypnotist who uses a male scientist as her subject.

2.2.2.1. Scientific Curiosity and Hypnotic Possibilities

Rationalism vs. Nervous Predisposition

Like Maupassant, Conan Doyle's novella traces the main character's moral decline, *via* the experience of hypnosis and the threat of madness, from initial certainty to complete intellectual dissolution. However, while Maupassant represented a character possessed by an unknown force *after* witnessing a hypnosis seance, Conan Doyle's text goes further by representing a character whose metamorphosis is due to more than his position as witness or observer. Indeed, as Professor Gilroy becomes both experimenter and subject of his experiment, Doyle's text thematizes the question of the porous boundary between observer and participant not only in suggestive practices, but also in scientific experimentation in general. To do so, it sets up a strong contrast between the main character's apparent rationalism and his susceptibility to be influenced by spiritualist forces later on in the text.

The title of Conan Doyle's novella is strongly reminiscent of Maupassant's—with the article "the" followed by the mention of an unknown entity which threatens contamination. Similarly, the date "March 24" formally signals the appearance of a diary entry—as in *Le Horla*, it omits the year, merely mentioning the day and month of the narrative events—which creates a sense of intimacy with the narrative voice. Like the description of the landscape in *The Horla,* the evocation of "the rich silent force of nature" in the opening page of *The Parasite* reinforces the impression of familiarity and safety. As in Maupassant, the evocation of the natural realm is used to establish Gilroy's position of intellectual stability and "moral and professional" certainty: "Outside my laboratory window the great chestnut-tree is all covered with the big, glutinous, gummy buds, some of which have already begun to break into little green shuttlecocks."[899] As in *Le Horla,* not only does this description of the tree evoke the main character's "rootedness" (here in a specifically English setting—"the heavy English air is laden with a faintly resinous perfume"), it also sets the stage for the intrusion of the "unnatural" into the realm of Nature:[900]

[899] Habbe, "The Horrors of Scientific Investigation," 50; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Parasite* (Harper Bros: New York, 1895),1.
[900] Doyle, *The Parasite,*1.

> How sweet and gentle and soothing is Nature! Who would think that there lurked in her also such vile forces, such odious possibilities! … this dreadful thing which has sprung out at me is neither supernatural nor even preternatural. No, it is a natural force which … society is ignorant of … subject to physical laws.[901]

It is no surprise, then, that Professor Gilroy is a rationalist who studies the realm of the material and the natural, with scientific and analytic methods of investigation that "closely resemble [Sherlock] Holmes's investigative method based on pure reason."[902] Indeed, he is one of the first chairs in the University, specializing in the "recognized" and "exact" science of physiology.[903] In Doyle's story, Gilroy refers to the human organism with the mechanistic model, describing it as a machine which Nature "readjusts" every year."[904] In this description, Spring—the season which opens the narrative—is described as both internal and external:[905] "We also have our spring when the little arterioles dilate, the lymph flows in a brisker stream, the glands work harder, winnowing and straining."[906] This mirroring of the external season in the internal space prepares the ulterior scenarios of parasitic contamination which are already evoked, *in potential,* by the title.

Physiology and psychology are opposed both in Gilroy's mind and in the beginning of the text. Psychology, which Gilroy initially dismisses as an "underground" science "of the future" and a "nebulous semi-science," is the domain of his friend, Wilson.[907] As Gilroy puts it in a clear-cut dismissal: "So long as half his subjects are tainted with *charlatanerie* and the other half with hysteria, we physiologists must content ourselves with the body and leave the mind to our descendants."[908] Unlike physiology, psychology is described as being laden with uncertainty and "lies," and involving work with "semi-maniacs."[909] For him, its objects are "vague and mystical and indefinite."[910]

Initial Skepticism: Hypnosis as Charlatanry

Furthermore, despite the scientific heyday of hypnotism that took place in France in the 1880s, from the perspective of Gilroy's 1895 positivist scientism, hypnosis is reduced to mere

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[901] Ibid., 1.
[902] Habbe, "The Horrors of Scientific Investigation," 49.
[903] Doyle, 3.
[904] Ibid., 2.
[905] "I can see it without, and feel it within." Ibid., 2
[906] Ibid., 2.
[907] Ibid., 3.
[908] Ibid., 5.
[909] Ibid., 7. Here a parallel can be drawn both with Charcot's dismissal of psychology, and with the suspicion that the hypnotic-hysteric subject "lies."
[910] Ibid., 8.

charlatanry: "I have no doubt that he has some new mesmerist or clairvoyant or medium or trickster of some sort whom he is going to exhibit to us."[911]

Gilroy describes hypnotic suggestion as a dubious object of study, grouping it together with affective or sensory phenomena which he opposes to the scientific study of material objects: "I have trained myself to deal only with fact and with proof. … Show me what I can see with my microscope, cut with my scalpel, weigh in my balance, and I will devote a lifetime to its investigation."[912] Because of its mimetic, *contagious* potential, suggestion belongs to the emotional and subjective elements of human experience and is dismissed as uncertain: "Surmise and fancy have no place in my scheme of thought. … When you ask me to study feelings, impressions, suggestions, you ask me to do what is distasteful and even demoralizing. A departure from pure reason affects me like an evil smell or a musical discord."[913] Significantly, Gilroy's mistrust of hypnotism is linked to the fact that he associates psychology, with "women's" taste for the irrational, which he opposes, in a reductive, gendered binary and demonstration of physiological-aesthetic disgust and contempt ("evil smell … musical discord"), to the supposedly masculine qualities of rationalism and analytic thinking.

Nevertheless, as Doyle's story shows, this strong aversion for the irrational, rather than protecting him from it, reveals Gilroy's vulnerability to the "feelings, impressions and suggestions" in the face of which he will lose control.[914] Gilroy's gendered condescension—which ultimately leads to his downfall—appears to stem from a latent fear of being overpowered by the "feminine" qualities that already seem to preexist in him.

For instance, Gilroy opposes his intellectual, academic materialism to his personal "nature" and "temperament," which lean towards the spiritualist side of the spectrum: "by nature I am, unless I deceive myself, a highly psychic man. I was a nervous, sensitive boy, a dreamer, a somnambulist, full of impressions and intuitions."[915] Therefore, beneath the image of the man of science and experimenter lies a deeper core of latent nervous predisposition, sensitivity, and susceptibility to hypnotism, ready to emerge once the narrative allows it. In Doyle's tale, the experimenter conceals a subject of experimentation, lying in wait.

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[911] Ibid., 8. The term "trickster"—which is central to our whole aesthetic discussion of hypnotism—indicates the protagonist's skepticism, which retrospectively qualifies all of the enumerated terms as equally untrustworthy.
[912] Ibid., 6.
[913] Ibid.
[914] Ibid.
[915] Doyle, 5.

Furthermore, commenting on the "steadying effect" of diary-keeping upon his mind, Gilroy confesses: "I fear that, after all, much of my neurotic temperament survives, and that I am far from that cool, calm precision which characterizes Murdoch or Pratt-Haldane."[916] His aversion—being rooted in fear—is motivated by affective, rather than rational reasons, and thus lies in the very emotional reactions which he dismissed as feminine.[917] Conan Doyle therefore opens the story with a main character whose "neurotic" temperament makes him especially vulnerable to the elements from which he seems so determined to protect himself.[918] His rationalism and materialism appear as the defense mechanisms of the male English bourgeois individual against what he calls his own "weakness," but what hypnosis will reveal as an overwhelming force, or power, further on in the text.[919] The worrying, uncontainable, unpredictable and *internal* manifestations of Nature threaten the character *from within* before they even manifest in external elements in the narrative and the plot. In this sense, well before he realizes that "all power within the novella emanates from a woman, who is old, unattractive, and foreign at that," Gilroy is threatened by his own "feminine" unconscious.[920]

Conversion Through Spectacle: Miss Penclosa's Demonstration

As Laura Habbe notes, at the beginning of the story, Gilroy "is so eager to exploit Penclosa's power for his own scientific advancement that he entirely disregards her as a human being with her own wishes and agenda."[921] However, as the narrative unfolds, the "ordinary" fin-de-siècle power structures and gender roles are overturned by allowing the usual subject of the experiment, "a woman, to seize control of the proceedings."[922]

Initially, the character of Miss Penclosa is portrayed in terms of the "irrational" female power to "attract, unbalance, even to destroy the controlled, organized Victorian male as he sees himself."[923] As a colonial Other—from Trinidad—she is able to "undermine male confidence" in

[916] Ibid., 8.
[917] Ibid., 6.
[918] Later on, reflecting common racial prejudice of the time, he will similarly attribute his hypnotic susceptibility to hereditary factors: whereas he himself is "black and "Celtic" and therefore more vulnerable, his neighbor Slater's "phlegmatic Saxon temperament" makes him less susceptible to miss Penclosa's powers. Ibid., 72.
[919] Ibid., 9.
[920] Habbe, 52.
[921] Ibid., 56.
[922] Ibid., 62
[923] Knight, 181.

her "overturning of a moralized racial hierarchy."[924] Paradoxically, in a sense, Miss Penclosa seems to be more "scientifically" advanced than Gilroy, when, noting his aversion to Mesmerism, she exclaims: "Dear me, I thought science had got further than that."[925] Nevertheless, due to the unease that stems from her Otherness and hypnotic powers, like Du Maurier's Svengali, she is exoticized and animalized throughout the text, with a lexical field that draws on tropes of predatory, often feline, creatures.[926] Later on, she is demonized and denied humanity altogether, in descriptions that compare her to "a monstrous parasite" and call her a "devil woman with her tricks."[927]

Penclosa's character is opposed to another, Victorian female figure, that of Gilroy's young and innocent—English—fiancée, Agatha. The scene in which Miss Penclosa hypnotizes Agatha is set up as a spectacle with dubious esthetics and morals, in front of a mixed audience.[928] In this demonstration, Miss Penclosa performs an induction then whispers a posthypnotic suggestion into Agatha's ear (instructing her to end her engagement with Gilroy), and slips a piece of paper to Gilroy, telling him to open it the next morning, at 10 am. The theatricality of the scene is reinforced by the "red velvet arm-chair" which is "pushed into the centre" as Agatha adopts the passive position of the conventional female hypnotic subject: "lay[ing] back in it, a little flushed and trembling slightly from excitement."[929]

The stark contrast and imbalance in power between both female figures is felt in the verticality of the spatial disposition of their bodies, as well as in Gilroy's reaction of repulsion: "She looked down at Agatha with an expression which I resented from the bottom of my soul—

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[924] Habbe, 57.
[925] Doyle, 15.
[926] For example, she is repeatedly referred to as a "creature" with "feline" eyes," her voice "came through her white lips like a snake's hiss"; she is also compared to "a cat with a mouse"; "a tiger," etc. Doyle, 13; 92; 122; 134. Like Svengali or Vautrin, much of Penclosa's power is revealed in the descriptions of her eyes—which blend together animalistic, masculine and feminine traits: "her most remarkable, and … least pleasant, feature… gray with a shade of green"; "her eyes follow me about the room," their expression "furtive"; "feline"; "imperious"; "fierce—coldly and inexorably so." Doyle 13; 37; 88; 100.
[927] Ibid., 89. Significantly, Miss Penclosa comes to life with a fluidic power which she can direct but does not seem to own: without it, she is quasi-invisible. Indeed, it is only when she is actively hypnotizing another character that she comes alive with her power, which reinforces the split between two opposed states, even in the operator herself. "Strange what a silent, colorless creature she is save only when she exercises her power!"; "even talking about it gives her color and life." Male hypnotists like Svengali on the other hand, seem to retain their powers even when they are not "exerting" them on a subject. Their power is inherent to their "masculine" nature, and is not dependent on their existence as a hypnotist. Ibid., 37.
[928] "All the company had gathered round us in a circle"; "something between a religious ceremony and a conjurer's entertainment"; "some awed, some critical." Ibid., 17.
[929] Ibid., 17.

the expression with which a Roman empress might have looked at her kneeling slave."[930] Later on however, once Gilroy is under Miss Penclosa's powers, this very lexical field of slavery is reworked into passages where the erotic charge of hypnotic rapport is brought to the foreground: "she passed her hand over my hair as one caresses a dog; and it gave me pleasure—the caress. I thrilled under it. I was her slave, body and soul, and for the moment I rejoiced in my slavery."[931]

As in *The Horla* and *Trilby,* Agatha's acting out of the post-hypnotic suggestion the next day serves as indubitable proof in the minds of the characters. Described with the vocabulary of dissociation and dual consciousness, Agatha's strange behavior and ending of her engagement with Gilroy portrays her as an automaton: Agatha is "not like [her]self," her voice "was cold and measured; her manner strangely formal and hard."[932] Reinforcing this dimension of pure automatism, Miss Penclosa uses the image of clockwork, in which the mechanist model reduces the human body and will to a series of automatic reactions: "what I did was to set her mind as I might set the alarum of a clock so that at the hour named it would go off of its own accord."[933] The Like Trilby or Maupassant's Mme Sablé*,* when confronted, Agatha is found peacefully reading at home, recalling nothing of their interaction except having fallen asleep while reading and of a "vague" dream about Gilroy.[934] Almost as if he were a somnambulist himself, is only when the clock strikes ten that, with a process of—mechanical—psychological association, Gilroy suspects that hypnosis might have anything to do with Agatha's unexplainable behavior.[935] As was the case for Balzac's Dr. Minoret, upon reading the explanatory note, Gilroy experiences a violent paradigm shift, which does not lead to religious conversion, but to acknowledging suggestion as a "fact" belonging to the laws of nature: "For me hypnotic suggestion was finally established. It took its place from now onward as one of the facts of life. That Agatha, who of all women of my acquaintance has the best balanced mind, had been reduced to a condition of automatism appeared to be certain."[936]

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[930] Ibid.
[931] Ibid., 88.
[932] Ibid., 24; 25.
[933] Ibid., 38.
[934] "I merely had a vague impression that you came into it. I cannot recall any thing definite." Ibid., 32.
[935] "The clock upon the mantel-piece struck ten. Ten! I associated the idea with Miss Penclosa's note." Ibid., 27.
[936] Rather than receive a causal or scientific explanation, suggestion is described with an analogy that reinforces the fascinating—rather than rational—aspects of hypnosis. Indeed, Gilroy uses a comparison drawn from the world of engineering and weaponry: "a person at a distance had worked her as an engineer on the shore might guide a Brennan torpedo." Here the mesmerist is described as having the extraordinary—and violent—power to remotely manipulate the subject. Ibid., 29; 30.

Following Penclosa's demonstration, Gilroy's perspective on hypnosis radically changes. Because it appears to cause an "eclipse" of the soul, hypnosis refutes his initial materialism: "Her body was there on the velvet chair. … But her soul! It had slipped from beyond our ken. Whither had it gone? What power had dispossessed it? I was puzzled and disconcerted."[937] A second formulation is then proposed, consisting in a spiritualist description of (dis)possesion that confirms the relinquishment of the materialist paradigm: "A second soul had stepped in, as it were, had pushed her own aside, and had seized her nervous mechanism, saying: 'I will work this for half an hour'."[938] Here, hypnosis is described as an infiltration of the material (body) by the spiritual (soul), as the hypnotist takes control from within and reduces the somatic envelope to an empty shell, and temporarily replaces one soul with another: from remote-control, the language has switched to invasion and possession, and hypnosis is represented here as complete parasitism.

Far from referring to the subject's active use of their cognitive imaginative capacities, hypnosis here blends together images of vampirism and spiritualism, as one's willpower is "overridden by a stronger one," and the operator "project[s]" their will "into another person," leaving their own body "lethargic," or gains "complete command over his subject … make him do whatever he likes."[939]

Scientific Enthusiasm: The Subject of Enunciation as Subject of Experimentation

Unlike Maupassant's text, instead of immediately creating fear and anxiety, the establishment of hypnosis *as fact* first sparks enthusiasm in Conan Doyle's main character. Indeed, for Gilroy's scientifically oriented mind, hypnosis implies a widening of horizons, an enrichment of observable facts: "my horizon of scientific possibilities has suddenly been enormously extended."[940] No longer dismissive of Wilson's unexplored field, Gilroy is suddenly excited about the scientific prospects of psychology, which he now describes as touching upon "the very roots of life and the nature of the soul!" and makes his own physiological laboratory observations seem "petty" in comparison.[941] Gilroy and Wilson then go on to conduct a series of experiments where Gilroy will be submitted to Penclosa's hypnotic powers.

[937] Ibid., 20.
[938] Ibid., 30.
[939] Ibid., 40-42.
[940] Ibid., 33.
[941] Ibid., 34.

In this reversal, hypnosis has thus "corrected" Gilroy's initial position about the relations between mind and matter: "The brain, I thought, secreted the mind, as the liver does the bile. But how can this be when I see mind working from a distance and playing upon matter as a musician might upon a violin?"[942] As in Maupassant, the invocation of the wind—an immaterial force which acts upon visible material objects—is used to strengthen the argument about spirit: "the windmill does not give rise to the wind, but only indicates it."[943] At this stage of the narrative, a fact or phenomenon has thus emerged and reversed the order of primary causes and the hierarchical relations between the material and the spiritual. When Gilroy notes: "it was opposed to my whole habit of thought, and yet it was undeniably possible and worthy of investigation," rationalism and materialism are now defined as "habits" to be deconstructed—the very same habits that were previously opposed to his inner "temperament" and "nature." Accusing skeptical colleagues of giving in to "unreasoning prejudices," Gilroy now established the spiritual as a "positive and objective" fact, worthy of scientific inquiry. In short, the narrator's "conversion" has been completed.[944]

One of the originalities of Doyle's text is having submitted his own main character to the hypnotic experiment himself, and producing a first-person description of the experience. In the scene in which Gilroy is hypnotized by Penclosa, we find him boasting about the advantage of him being both extremely susceptible—a characteristic previously associated with femininity—yet capable of self-examination—thanks to his rational and scientific mind. Significantly, while he believes to be lauding the powers of science, Gilroy is in fact emphasizing the power of storytelling: "To have the power of examining these phenomena from inside—to have an organism which will respond, and at the same time a brain which will appreciate and criticize—that is surely a unique advantage."[945]

The description of Gilroy going into hypnosis, narrated from the perspective of the hypnotic subject, is both poetic and realistic:

> My eyes were fixed upon Miss Penclosa's face, but as I gazed the features seemed to blur and to fade away. I was conscious only of her own eyes looking down at me, gray, deep, inscrutable. Larger they grew and larger, until they changed suddenly into two mountain lakes toward which I seemed to be falling with horrible rapidity. I shuddered, and as I did so some deeper stratum of thought told me that the shudder represented the rigor which I had observed in Agatha. An instant later I struck the surface of the lakes, now joined into

[942] Ibid. In Gilroy's new paradigm, the body no longer gives rise to the soul, but rather the soul is now "the rough instrument by which the spirit manifests itself. Ibid, 35.
[943] Ibid., 35.
[944] Ibid., 35; 37.
[945] Ibid., 44.

> one, and down I went beneath the water with a fulness in my head and a buzzing in my ears. Down I went, down, down, and then with a swoop up again until I could see the light streaming brightly through the green water. I was almost at the surface when the word "Awake!" rang through my head, and, with a start, I found myself back in the arm-chair, with Miss Penclosa leaning on her crutch, and Wilson, his note book in his hand, peeping over her shoulder.[946]

Here, the aquatic metaphor and lexical field of dissolution reinforce the image of drifting downwards, still frequently used by hypnotist to represent access to unconscious material, the "deeper strat[a] of thought" mentioned here. The repetition of the term "down" simultaneously creates an inductive effect for the reader, leading the text to perform what it describes. However, as Gilroy's "shudder" and the adjective "horrible" indicate, the image of dissolution is inherently ambiguous, suggesting "nothing less than the disintegration of a soul, and the dissolution of personality."[947]

This aquatic metaphor is carried out into the subsequent experiments to which Gilroy submits himself: "What strange, deep waters these are!"[948] In these experiments—as the Flaubertian narrator ironically pointed out—the fascinating dimension of hypnosis is linked to the difficulty in identifying the cause behind its seemingly extraordinary effects:

> *Results, results, results—and the cause an absolute mystery*. It is stimulating to the imagination, but I must be on my guard against that. Let us have no inferences nor deductions, and nothing but solid facts. I KNOW that the mesmeric trance is true; I KNOW that mesmeric suggestion is true; I KNOW that I am myself sensitive to this force. That is my present position.[949]

Therefore, in order to prevent "drowning" and remain on the firm land of "solid facts," Gilroy and Wilson adopt a rigorous scientific attitude towards their object, recording and manipulating various "experimental conditions" in a manner that goes beyond the amateur experiments set up by Maupassant's character. Here, the doctors take note of varying parameters ("temperature of room, barometric pressure, pulse, and respiration"), engage in multiple classifications ("Notebook A"), use excessively technical vocabulary ("sphygmographic chart taken by Professor Wilson"), which all serve to guarantee the—illusion of—rationality of the procedures, in a quasi-parody of the Salpêtrière's method. [950]

Most striking is the motivation behind the reversal of gender roles in the traditional hypnotic rapport: "Professors have demonstrated these things upon women at Nancy and at the

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[946] Ibid., 45-46.
[947] George M. Gould, "The Ethics of Hypnotism." *The Open Court* 4 (1890): 2172–73.
[948] Doyle, 47.
[949] Ibid., 48, emphasis added.
[950] Doyle, 49; 52.

Salpêtrière. It will be more convincing when a woman demonstrates it upon a professor, with a second professor as a witness."[951] Placing a woman in a position of scientific authority is yet another parameter to be manipulated by the male experimenters. Gilroy's being "experimented upon" by Miss Penclosa is ironically presented as remaining under his control, described as a noble "devotion to science" and a "sacrifice which truth ever requires of us" rather than a gradual loss of control.[952]

2.2.2.2. Fatal Attraction: Hypnosis and Parasitism

The Rise of Anxiety

Nevertheless, this emphasis and excessive faith in analytic-scientific modes of being in the world will be sharply criticized in the remaining parts of the narrative. Indeed, Gilroy and Wilson's initial enthusiasm is quickly mitigated by the dangers of hypnotism, which, as noted in Chapter 1, was often conceived as a potential "relapse to the mental and social conditions of animalism and barbarism" by *fin-de-siècle* critics.[953] Several passages of Doyle's tale reinforce this association between hypnotic trance and the dangers of a "primitive" Other: "My soul was filled with a hatred as bestial as the love against which it was a reaction. It was the savage, murderous passion of the revolted serf" "and if the suggestion had been to assassinate me? … But this is a terrible power!" I cried.— "It is, as you say, a terrible power," she answered gravely, and the more you know of it the more terrible will it seem to you."[954]

The terror caused by these dangers are intimately linked to the power of the feminine and the erotic charge at the heart of hypnotic rapport. In Doyle's text, Victorian fantasies and anxieties about moral dissolution thus blend together with xenophobic fears of being haunted by the—punishing and persecutory—colonized Other. In this context, science gradually appears as increasingly helpless in the face of Penclosa's dark powers.

At the same time, science is equally unable to provide the distressed individual with the understanding and compassion that he requires. For instance, further on, when Gilroy has become

[951] Ibid., 49.
[952] Ibid., 50. The ultimate authority of the experiments is guaranteed by Wilson's perspective, in case Gilroy's becomes fallible during the process.
[953] Gould, "The Ethics of Hypnotism," 2172. This *fin-de-siècle* conception is comparable to Dr. Vaucorbeil's condemnation of hypnotism in *Bouvard et Pécuchet.*
[954] Doyle, 91; 38.

the helpless victim of Penclosa's power and thinks of turning to Wilson for help, he realizes that he will receive no empathy from the cold medical practitioner:

> I am convinced that I should not have the slightest sympathy from him. He would look upon me as an interesting case, and read a paper about me at the next meeting of the Psychical Society, in which he would gravely discuss the possibility of my being a deliberate liar, and weigh it against the chances of my being in an early stage of lunacy. No, I shall get no comfort out of Wilson.[955]

Indeed, when he finally confides in Wilson, Gilroy feels treated "like a freak at a fair" by a doctor who "has lost sight of human beings. Every thing [*sic*] to him is a case and a phenomenon."[956]

Gilroy's downfall and experience as a vulnerable experimental subject denounces the medical position that he himself used to embody, as lacking humanity and unable to attain a complete understanding of the individual and his emotional experience. As Gilroy acknowledges the power of hypnotic rapport and realizes the impossibility of reaching objectivity in his experiment, he finally admits that his previous scientific outlook lead him to neglect the—unconscious and affective—dimension at play in human relations, including his own: "In my eagerness for scientific facts I have been foolishly blind to the human relations between Miss Penclosa and myself."[957]

Indeed, with increasing frequency, Gilroy finds himself engaging in erotic behavior during his experiments with Penclosa, whose romantic interest is now clear—and is initially attributed to "her ardent West Indian manner."[958] Just as Gilroy's aversion to irrationality previously concealed his strong nervous sensibility, his horrified reaction to the erotic nature of the hypnosis sessions points toward repressed sexual desire which the conscious—Victorian—self finds morally intolerable: "I could not, no, I COULD not, trust myself another moment… in a moment of reasonless passion"; "was it the sudden upcropping of some lower stratum in my nature—a brutal primitive instinct suddenly asserting itself? I could almost believe the tales of obsession by evil spirits, so overmastering was the feeling."[959] As the text progresses, hypnosis becomes a means to represent the dance of female seduction and male erotic impulse, concealed under a layer of moral guilt and condemnation that systematically associates the erotic—and hypnotic—with the primitive: "this creature … possesses no single charm upon earth. But when I am near her. … She rouses something in me, something evil, something I had rather not think of. She paralyzes my

[955] Ibid., 82-83.
[956] Ibid., 97.
[957] Ibid., 54, emphasis added.
[958] Doyle, 55.
[959] Ibid., 55-56. Capitals in original.

better nature, too, at the moment when she stimulates my worse. Decidedly it is not good for me to be near her."[960] Although Miss Penclosa's character is now reduced to the external cause and trigger of erotic desire ("this monstrous temptation which drags me so low") Gilroy no longer feels he can be master of himself in her presence: "I *know* that I cannot trust myself with that woman."[961] In this sense, the rational, conscious will has lost control and power, and the main protagonist been stripped of all sense of self-mastery, as both agency and moral responsibility are shifted—*via* hypnosis—to the female character.

Imminent Downfall

Toward the end of the story, the erotic dispossession set up by Doyle's text leads to a more general psychological disintegration, as Gilroy begins to doubt his own sanity and use formulations that resemble those of the narrator of *The Horla*: "11 P. M. God help me! What is the matter with me? Am I going mad?"[962] Conjointly, Gilroy's physical state begins to deteriorate as he keeps returning to Miss Penclosa's house, gradually describing his helplessness with stronger and stronger terms: "as if the noose of a rope had been cast round me"; "I am in her clutch"; "I must do as she wills."[963] Here, the text puts forth the complete deresponsabilization of a narrator who attributes his actions and experience to the power of the hypnotist, which culminates in the metaphor of parasitism, illuminating the title of the novella: "while I am under the spell, she can make me love her … those odious impulses do not come from me at all … she can project herself into my body … yes, she is a parasite, a monstrous parasite. She creeps into my frame as the hermit crab does into the whelk's shell. I am powerless."[964]

Unlike *Le Horla*—where the narrator's madness was dramatized from within the undecidable framework of his solitude—here Doyle's text also gives voice to Miss Penclosa, whose own discourse casts doubt on the narrator's version of the story, shifting the blame back onto Gilroy:

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[960] Ibid., 58.
[961] Ibid., 63-64.
[962] Ibid., 65.
[963] Ibid., 66.
[964] Ibid., 67. Several scenes of *The Parasite* bear striking resemblance to *The Horla.* For example, in passages such as these, "I lay down with my clothes on and began to read one of Dumas's novels. Suddenly I was gripped and dragged from the couch. It is only thus that I can describe the overpowering nature of the force which pounced upon me. I clawed at the coverlet. I clung to the wood-work. I believe that I screamed out in my frenzy. It was all useless, hopeless. I *must* go. There was no way out of it," the narrative seems to switch to the fantastic mode, and yet continues to refer to a "force"—rather than to a "being"—that seizes the character and compels him to act. Ibid., 84

> It was you who asked me to enter into a series of experiments with you, it was you who won my affections, it was you who professed your love for me, it was you who brought me your own photograph with words of affection upon it, and, finally, it was you who on the very same evening thought fit to insult me most outrageously, addressing me as no man has ever dared to speak to me yet.[965]

With the insistent repetition of "you," the text poses the central question that stems from the observation of post-hypnotic suggestion—that of "who" is really acting—and preserves a certain degree of ambiguity regarding the final attribution of responsibility, albeit in a less undecidable manner than in Maupassant's text. By making space for Penclosa's version of the story, the text pulls the interpretative framework back toward the hypothesis of the narrator's delusion—perhaps even unconscious bad faith—rather than his possession.

Indeed, Doyle's parasitic model—which involves possession from within rather than from without—allows for such ambiguity to be maintained: the "force" overpowering Gilroy could very well be internal and post-hypnotic, not supernatural in the least.[966] Rather, in Doyle's text, "supernatural" and "naturalizing" passages alternate, with the narration periodically reverting to the "dual consciousness" paradigm and describing events from a psychological perspective:

> A peculiar double consciousness possessed me. There was the predominant alien will, which was bent upon drawing me to the side of its owner, and there was the feebler protesting personality, which I recognized as being myself, tugging feebly at the overmastering impulse as a led terrier might at its chain. I can remember recognizing these two conflicting forces, but I recall nothing of my walk, nor of how I was admitted to the house.[967]

As the narrative comes to a close, the narrator becomes less and less reliable—which, as in Maupassant, is facilitated by the form of the first-person diary entry. Statements from other characters confirm this unreliability. For instance, his colleague Pratt-Haldane suspects that Gilroy suffers from "brain congestion."[968] Professional and moral degradation then ensues, as Gilroy's Chair is revoked, and he is dismissed from the university. The plot then accelerates as Gilroy's actions appear more and more irrational and "dispossessed": he breaks into the bank of England, becomes suicidal, attacks Sadler, and finally catches himself holding a bottle of vitriol in Agatha's boudoir, on his way to poison his fiancée.

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[965] Ibid., 101.

[966] Nevertheless, it is important to note that the model of exterior demonic possession is also present in the story, almost "replacing" hypnosis in certain passages, as the character himself admits: "what would I myself have said a short month ago if one of my colleagues had come to me with a story of demonic possession?" Ibid., 106.

[967] Ibid., 86.

[968] Ibid., 108. Furthermore, one of his students lets him know that "in one portion of the lecture [Gilroy] championed the most outrageous and unscientific heresies," and the character of Sadler compares him to a "madman." Doyle, 110; 126.

At the end of the story, suffering from absolute defamiliarization in a familiar world and alienated from the rest of his community, Gilroy appears to descend into madness, having learnt that "there are powers which are uncontrollable by academic analysis and classification" the hard way.[969] Hypnotic invasion and loss of control having led to his literal "alienation," he finds himself in a state of absolute moral, intellectual, and political isolation:

> I am weighed down and tortured by a power of which science knows nothing. No magistrate would listen to me. No paper would discuss my case. No doctor would believe my symptoms. My own most intimate friends would only look upon it as a sign of brain derangement. I am out of all touch with my kind.[970]

Here, human institutions—academic, legal, medical, scientific—as well as human empathy and solidarity—friendship—are dismissed as equally helpless in the face of the "power" acting upon Gilroy. Unlike Maupassant's tale, in which the final elimination of the parasitic force remains uncertain, *The Parasite* closes with a final certainty—that of failure. Indeed, Gilroy's final and desperate hope of murdering Miss Penclosa is frustrated, as the woman has died of natural death before he has a chance to act. The main character's ability to act has thus been utterly and completely annihilated, as the Other—the irrational, the exotic, the female, the hypnotic—emerges victorious, beyond Penclosa's physical death. This is what leads Laura Habbe to describe *The Parasite* as "an anomaly compared with much of Doyle's work," as here, in the end, "the rational hero is not victorious over the foreign threat."[971]

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Ultimately, *The Parasite* makes use of hypnosis as a powerful means to crystallize a variety of fears centered on the Other, especially the female-foreign. These late Victorian, moral and political-colonial anxieties are dramatized through the "dangers" associated with hypnosis at the end of the century, pertaining to hypnotic crimes, posthypnotic suggestion and amnesia. Simultaneously, Doyle's text uses hypnosis in service of a spiritualist criticism of orthodox science, by reworking the relations between mind and matter, and using its "semi-science" to both threaten medical authority and force it to broaden its field of inquiry. Indeed, as Laura Habbe has shown, Gilroy experiences his final degeneracy not in spite of, but *because* of his scientific

[969] Habbe, 55.
[970] Doyle, 115.
[971] Habbe, 49.

investigation into hypnotism: his downfall can be attributed to his initial mindset which "ultimately neglects all other aspects of human interaction."[972] In this sense, Doyle's tale can be read as a "critique of the tendency of materialist science to neglect the human aspect of research."[973] Rather than merely serve as "proof" for the supernatural, then, Doyle's interest in paranormal and parapsychological phenomena also "serves to expose the impotence of a close-minded and purely positivist understanding of the world."[974]

Had hypnosis been conceptualized as a legitimate scientific object—rather than on the model of demonic possession and contamination—Gilroy might have learned that "academic analysis and classification" cannot do without taking into consideration the—affective, unconscious, human—elements that Gilroy excluded from it at the beginning of the tale. In its criticism of materialist science, Doyle's text might thus also be considered as an anticipatory call for a science of the mind which takes into account the unconscious phenomena which inspired both fear and fascination at the end of the century, and were about to be theorized with the birth of psychoanalysis.

2.2.3. Artistic Automata: Du Maurier's *Trilby*

The immense popular success of George Du Maurier's novel *Trilby* led its main characters, Trilby—the tone-deaf model who became the most famous soprano in Europe—and Svengali—the genius composer with no voice and "evil" hypnotist—to "enter the cultural mythology of the *fin-de-siècle* along with Dracula, Nora and Sherlock Holmes."[975] Indeed, while the "robust and ribald world of magnetic attractions remained part of the music hall and theatrical tradition throughout the late Victorian years," it culminated with "the carnivalesque Svengalis who popped up in cartoons, poetic spoofs and plays, in the aftermath of Du Maurier's triumph."[976]

Indeed, *Trilby* was serialized in the American magazine *Harper's New Month,* and is generally thought to have been the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century. Published in book form in 1894 in the United States, it sold more than 200,000 copies in the first year, unleashing a

[972] Ibid., 49.
[973] Ibid., 50.
[974] Ibid., 50; 62.
[975] Elaine Showalter, Introduction to Georges Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press,1998), vii.
[976] Pick, 56.

passion "in excess of any evident logic."[977] There is thus an intimate relation between the reception of the novel, its theme, and the rise of capitalism and mass media at the turn of the century.[978] The publication of the novel set off a marketing frenzy during which "the heroine's name was bestowed upon a hat, several shoes designs, candy, toothpaste, soap, a brand of sausage, and even a town in Florida. Trilby's face appeared on dolls, fans, writing paper, puzzles, and there were ice cream bars made in the shape of her feet."[979] By "drawing on popular myths surrounding musical stars," the novel thus also became its own popular myth: "Reality and fictional topic matter uncannily echo each other."[980] In this sense, "it was as though the very reception of the book and the play manifested the hypnotic problem described in its plot."[981]

As a bilingual author, Du Maurier offers a *fin-de-siècle* perspective on hypnotism both in the francophone world, and on the moral, social and esthetic values of mid-century British society. Set both in Paris and London, the story takes place in the 1850s and early 1860s, but—in a gap similar to Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*—is told from the perspective of the 1890s. Upon the publication of *Trilby,* the medical press of the time declared that Du Maurier had produced "an exceptionally accurate rendition of the hypnotic relationship," a "literary masterpiece, in which the conditions of hypnotism are used with the power of genius."[982] Du Maurier, who experimented with magnetism during his early years and remained critical of "the imperialistic claims of science" from then on, used his fictional representations of hypnosis "to point out the inadequacy of orthodox science, materialistic medicine or Darwinian explanations of psychology."[983] Nevertheless, as was the case for Doyle and Maupassant, Du Maurier's treatment of hypnosis perpetuates myths about the practice which were common in the popular and medical culture of the time. In the *British Medical Journal,* the character of Trilby was described, "*like all thorough*

[977] For Pick this success occurred "for reasons which had little to do with literary merit." Ibid., 43.
[978] Henry James himself describes the effect of this 'Trilbymania' as a "landslide of obsessions, of inane incongruous letters, of interviewers, intruders, invaders." Henry James, "George Du Maurier." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* 34: (Sept. 1897): 607.
[979] Pintar and Lynn, *Hypnosis: a Brief History*, 1.
[980] Phyllis Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900; Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 271.
[981] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 22.
[982] Ernest Hart, "The Hypnotism of '*Trilby'*," *British Medical Journal* (20 November 1895): 209.
[983] Pick describes Du Maurier as being haunted by "intuitions of unconscious mental states … as well as by a painful sense of 'the unknowable' in the human spirit and in the heavens." After his death in 1896, his friend Felix Moscheles published a book recounting both men's experiments with animal magnetism during their youth, titled *In Bohemia with Du Maurier.* Pick, Ibid., 19.

hypnotics" as being "reduced to the state of a *marvelous machine*, capable of receiving the most perfect training and in *complete* subjection to the will and the suggestion of the operator."[984]

In this section, I will begin by exploring how Du Maurier's novel both reflected and participated in creating late Victorian fears about hypnotism, and conceptualized the relations between the medical and the artistic aspects of the practice by portraying "very strong images" of hypnotic rapport as it plays out on the opera stage.[985] Then, I will show that underlying this evocation of the "dangers" of hypnosis, like *Le Horla* and *The Parasite, Trilby* gives form to unconscious anxieties pertaining to the inner conflicts of Victorian society itself, rather than hypnosis *per se,* and does so by relating these questions to artistic creation itself. Therefore, in its very representation—and moral condemnation—of hypnotic influence, the text simultaneously poses the question of the influence of the artwork on the recipient. Finally, as I suggest, beneath these fears also lies a strong fascination for a practice which, by the end of the century, was moving away from previous pathologizing and conceptions and hinting at the possibility of hypnosis as a natural and active state. As I will show, feminist readings of *Trilby* point to a more emancipatory reading of the novel in which Trilby uses hypnosis *to* her advantage, rather than being merely used *by* Svengali and his domineering powers.[986]

2.2.3.1. Du Maurier's Representation of Hypnosis

Unlike *The Horla* and *The Parasite*, which focus more directly on the psychological questions of identity and dispossession, *Trilby* focuses on explicitly aesthetic questions, thematizing—*via* similar descriptions of hypnotic control and automatism—the question of the

[984] Hart, Ibid., emphasis added.

[985] Judith Pintar and Steven Jay Lynn, *Hypnosis: a Brief History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 8. Indeed, in the same article of the *British Medical Journal,* the description of automatism is presented as compatible with the idea of hypnotism as a natural state, capable of enhancing the subject's preexisting potential. As the article continues, it states that "the elaborate lessons of Svengali in vocalisation and dramatic passion might quite conceivably transform Trilby, who possesses a magnificent vocal organ, into a dramatic singer of the highest order." Rather than an unnatural occult phenomenon, hypnosis concerns "the transformation effected in a perfectly natural and physiological manner in the subject under the influence of external of auto-mental suggestion." Ibid. This conception, which aligns perfectly with Braid's theory as we described it in Chapter 1, implies that "No new ingredient or endowment has been 'injected into the subject'; rather the inhibitory influence of fear, shyness and other 'interfering mental emotion; had been removed." Pick, 125.

[986] Despite the centrality of these anxieties, because of its interest in popular culture, Du Maurier's text is considerably lighter than Maupassant's and Conan Doyle's. It is often humorous and lighthearted, it does not hesitate to multiply puns, jokes, phonetic transcriptions of various accents, bits of song and various other snippets from "lower" culture and Parisian Bohemian slang.

potentially authoritative and suggestive relations between artist, work and audience. Published at a time marked by the development of "multiple fads, tourism, the press and advertising agencies," *Trilby* manifests awareness that "literature was inevitably part of this dynamic and shifting marketing world."[987]

Furthermore, Du Maurier's serialized novel is traversed with reflections on esthetic representation, whether visual, aural or textual. Set in Paris Bohemia, its three main characters—Taffy, The Laird and Little Billee—are painters, who often discuss modes of artistic representation, and the respective merits of realist, emotional, or symbolic visual representations of reality in the work of art.[988] Nevertheless, in *Trilby,* aesthetic questions mostly appear in the field of music, which Du Maurier's engages with by drawing out the parallels between musicality, musical performance and hypnotic phenomena.

Indeed, the medical discourse of the time produced descriptions of the potentially dangerous effects of music on the "susceptible" or "vulnerable"—often female—subject in terms highly reminiscent of those that applied to hypnosis. Doctors in Victorian Britain, for instance, feared the "strong physical" influence "on the body, mind and emotions" that music imposed on the nervous system of the listener.[989] For instance, an anonymous article titled "The Piano as Cause of Neuroses" appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in 1899, reporting that the "crashing sounds" produced by musical performers "jar the delicate apparatus of the nervous system to a degree that, in irritable persons, might have serious consequences."[990] Like hypnosis, the musical experience was conceptualized in terms of the passive receptivity of a helpless subject, as "most listeners have little rational control over the way it influences them."[991] The act of listening to music was often described with the vocabulary of entrancement, as "in each experience lay the possibility of a radical loss of boundaries … a felt dissolution of the self, access to worlds of sensation unknown

[987] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 91. Indeed, "new mass literacy had fueled fears of a world of debased popular taste, in which books were just as often cast as agents of mental anarchy as they were celebrated as the sources of edification and education. While such anxieties and diatribes were not new, the sprinkling of neurological and degenerationist terms that characterized the later-Victorian discussion gave the whole subject of dissolute cultural tastes a particularly alarming and portentous scientific tone. Vulnerable readers were thought by some authorities to be entering into virtual trance states as they absorbed the latest vulgar best-seller." Pick, 80.

[988] Little Billee's paintings, with their "sense of beauty… quick seizing of a peculiar individuality… subtle rendering of a strongly received impression" are, out of the three, the only form of artistic representation which lives up to the "work of a master." Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 20.

[989] Weliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction*, 5-6.

[990] Anonymous. "The Piano as Cause of Neuroses," *British Medical Journal* (22 April 1899): 988.

[991] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 151.

in ordinary waking life."[992] As for the musician, musical performance and technique served as a common example to describe automatic processes, and as proof of the existence of unconscious and habitual learning patterns.[993] Conversely, in the field of hypnosis, musical analogies were also frequently used. As we saw in Chapter 1, music was already part of Mesmer's treatment around the *baquet.* During the nineteenth century, it was then used to describe hypnotic rapport as *harmony*: "the empathy between magnetizer and subject, was frequently explained though the analogy of two chords vibrating sympathetically."[994] These reasons explain why in popular culture, music became associated with the figure of the mesmerist, "becoming part of his stereotypical character and a metaphor for the mastery he exerted over Victorian heroines."[995] Significantly, Du Maurier's text itself is permeated with musicality and uses this association to its advantage. The repetition of recurrent phrases ("Milk Below") and songs ("Ben Bolt"), of rhythmic patterns and rhyming passages, all act as musical leitmotifs that not only "help the novel to cohere," but also inject, into the form of the narrative itself, some of the hypnotic power that it represents.[996]

Nevertheless, rather than thematize the relations between music and hypnosis from the perspective of an isolated listener, Du Maurier uses the *performance* on which they both rely to underline their shared theatrical dimension. As seen in Chapter 1, the parallels between hypnosis and theatrical performance were extremely frequent during this time, producing tropes of the patients as simulators or actresses, and of hypnotic operators as manipulative stage directors. Just like Charcot's patient Augustine would perform "on cue and on schedule" at the Salpêtrière, hypnotized women in the Victorian era, like Trilby, "utilized performance style that may have been unconsciously learned" or "consciously put on or posed," turning hypnosis into a "performance art, just as mesmerism was earlier in the century."[997] Critics have thus drawn the parallel between Trilby and Charcot's hysterical patients at the Salpêtrière, who while entranced,

[992] Pick, *Svengali's Web,*112.
[993] "Music making as representative of automotive process was a significant and recurring example in scientific studies which led to an understanding that there can be multiple levels of consciousness coexisting in one person." Weliver, 9.
[994] Weliver, 267.
[995] Ibid., 15. Conversely, the new stereotype of the mesmerizing and all-controlling musical conductor emerged, after "the dominant style of musical direction had shifted from a previously favored impersonal attitude towards a more self-conscious stress on the power of personal expression and even the demonic force of individual genius." While the mesmerist controlled the public by circulating the fluid, the baton becomes an extension of the conductor's powerful, magnetic personality. Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 113.
[996] Weliver, 13. For the importance of musicality—and musical variation—in hypnotic discourse, see Chapter 3.
[997] Showalter, *The Female Malady,*145; Weliver, 263.

participated in "an established type of performance ... displaying lively and gifted women whom society called 'ill'."[998]

Du Maurier's novel proposes a representation of hypnosis based on *fin-de-siè*cle theoretical models of dual consciousness, that emphasizes the dangers of hypnotic trance rather than its therapeutic value. These fears are concentrated in the character of Svengali, who as Pick notes, is a "dazzlingly memorable" meeting point of various currents of fear and fascination that brings together "many of the *fin-de-siècle* forebodings about the nature of hypnosis, alien control and the unconscious."[999] Indeed, the hypnotic encounter between Svengali and Trilby corresponds to "the dazzling culmination of older mesmeric excitements and dreads, as well as of racial fear and fascination."[1000]

Although, as we saw in Chapter 1, medical texts of the *fin-de-siècle* insisted on learned, *acquired*—rather than innate—processes of entering hypnotic trance, like Poe's mesmeric characters, Trilby is described as being naturally susceptible to hypnosis due to her "impressionable" disposition.[1001] This innate susceptibility is reinforced by a strong social determinism that suggests, as in Zola's naturalist novels, that vulnerable characters carry both innate biological flaws and environmental predispositions which lead to their ulterior downfall. As an orphan with a family history described as "a sad tale of drink and desertion, gambling and fighting," within the medico-psychiatric terms of debate in the time, Trilby is thus "extremely vulnerable to hypnosis."[1002]

It is no surprise, then, that like the works examined thus far, *Trilby* also begins by presenting hypnosis as "a perilous encounter between a powerful actor and a passive subject."[1003] Although it is introduced through the gateway of its therapeutic potential, hypnosis is presented as dangerous by The Laird early on in the novel, after Svengali relieves Trilby's neuralgic migraines with its "unnatural" powers:

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[998] Weliver, 259.
[999] Pick, 4.
[1000] Ibid., 220.
[1001] "She had a singularly impressionable nature, as was shown by her quick and ready susceptibility to Svengali's hypnotic influence." Du Maurier, *Trilby,* 53.
[1002] Pick, 23.
[1003] Pintar and Lynn, 6.

> He mesmerized you; that's what it is—mesmerism! I've often heard of it, but never seen it done before. They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please—lie, murder, steal—anything! and kill yourself into the bargain when they've done with you! It's just too terrible to think of![1004]

The specificity of Du Maurier's text, however, is that it represents this pure domination of the operator over the subject through the analogy between musician and instrument: "That Trilby was just a singing-machine—an organ to play upon—an instrument of music—a Stradivarius—a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood—a voice, and nothing more—just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with."[1005] As a singing body or automaton, Trilby is dehumanized and, losing her name, becomes La Svengali, a mere vessel for Svengali's artistic voice:

> When you heard her sing the "Nussbaum," the "Impromptu," you heard Svengali singing with her voice, just as you heard Joachim play a chaconne of Bach with his fiddle! Herr Joachim's fiddle ... what does it know of Sebastian Bach?[1006]

As Elaine Showalter phrases it, once Trilby is under hypnosis, La Svengali is a mere "case" that the hypnotist-conductor "fills with sound."[1007] Indeed, everything that makes Trilby "an unusual and memorable character" is systematically taken away from her, so that by the end of the story she is "less of a protagonist than she is a clockwork doll."[1008] When the three painters see her perform for the first time, it seems as though Svengali is "conducting her … just as if she had been an orchestra herself.[1009] This explains why the public often comments on the contrast between her beautiful singing and her "stupidity" off-stage, her inability to produce spoken utterances longer than a few monosyllables in German. Once she is under his spell, Svengali is able to "play her, quite literally as his instrument, until the end of her life."[1010] Therefore, the "musical brilliance" that Trilby demonstrates while under hypnosis is a result of "Svengali's will and talent moving through her," not her own.[1011] Beyond—or rather, through—the specific question of hypnotic influence, this division of musical labor between singer and composer points to the gender roles

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[1004] Du Maurier, 52. Here the opposition between the pronouns "they" and "you" reinforces the impression of a disreputable, esoteric and dangerous practice. The unnatural dimension of the therapeutic use Svengali made of mesmerism is denounced, rather than its beneficial aspect underlines: "I'd sooner have any pain than have it cured in that unnatural way, and by such a man as that!" Ibid.
[1005] Du Maurier, 299.
[1006] Ibid., 299.
[1007] For Showalter, this corresponds to yet another "myth in which men attempt to appropriate the creative organs of maternity." Showalter, "Introduction to *Trilby*," xix-xx.
[1008] Pintar and Lynn, 2. Indeed, the painters notice that her eyes are "larger, their expression not the same," on stage she "stood vacantly looking at everybody and everything … she seemed quite passive." Du Maurier, 222; 251.
[1009] Du Maurier, 210.
[1010] Pintar and Lynn, 4.
[1011] Ibid., 4.

still operating in the *fin-de-siècle* musical field: "in nineteenth-century Europe and America, while a great performer could be talented, only a composer could have innate, immutable genius."[1012]

In such conceptions of hypnotic rapport, Svengali possesses Trilby parasitically, using her like an instrument, against her will and without her knowledge. Early on in the narrative, the forceful, coercive dimension of Svengali's attempts to hypnotize her underline the involuntary dimension of Trilby's hypnotic experience, which bears resemblance to a psychical form of assault, even rape: "He would playfully try to mesmerize her with his glance, and sidle up nearer and nearer to her, making passes and counter-passes, with stern command in his eyes, till she would shake and shiver and almost sicken with fear, and all but feel the spell come over her, as in a nightmare."[1013] Significantly, the physical force of a male character—here, Taffy—is portrayed as necessary to protect Trilby from the sexual-hypnotic assaults of Svengali: "If Taffy were there he would interfere with a friendly 'Now then, old fellow, none of that!' And a jolly slap on the back, which would make Svengali cough for an hour, and paralyze his mesmeric powers for a week."[1014]

Indeed, unlike Doyle's tale—which leaves the question of the responsibility of the subject and operator somewhat open—Du Maurier's text makes it clear that Trilby is hypnotized without her conscious knowledge, even against her will. This can be felt for example in her vehement declaration that she will never love Svengali: "I never could be fond of him in the way he wished—never! It made me sick even to think of! Once I used to hate him—in Paris—in the studio; don't you remember?"[1015] As Pintar and Lynn have noted, in this passage "the sinister undertones of the hypnotic relation come fully to the surface, where unscrupulous practitioners seem able to abuse their victims, with devastating consequences."[1016]

Svengali's power is in great part due to his implanting a central suggestion in Trilby's mind early on in the novel: "When your pain arrives, then shall you come once more to Svengali, and he shall take it away from you, and keep it himself for a soufenir [*sic*] of you when you are gone.

[1012] Weliver, 5.
[1013] Du Maurier, 73. Here one can note the old model, where the operator is described as authoritative and all-commanding, and still relies on magnetic passes to induce the hypnotic state. The description of the state itself as a "spell" further reinforces the impression of passivity and helplessness of the subject.
[1014] Du Maurier, 73. Female safety is entirely dependent on the physical presence of a masculine force for protection, which, because of its "jolly" undertones of masculine camaraderie, minimizes the violating dimension of Trilby's experience.
[1015] Du Maurier, 300.
[1016] Pintar and Lynn, 5.

… And you shall see nothing, hear nothing, think of nothing but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!"[1017] The internal, subjective experience of the *idée fixe* or implanted suggestion—the description of which is absent from Maupassant and Conan Doyle's texts, that prefer post-hypnotic amnesia and the retrospective recounting of forgotten actions—is described as painful, and hauntingly obsessive: "'Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!' went ringing in her head and ears till it became an obsession, a dirge, a knell, an unendurable burden, almost as hard to bear as the pain in her eyes"; "She dreamed of him, oftener than she dreamed of Taffy, the Laird, or even Little Billee."[1018] Even after Svengali's death, as Trilby holds a large photograph of him (in which he is "looking straight out of the picture, straight at you"), the mere sight of his eyes puts her back into the trance state and causes her to sing.[1019] When Trilby dies shortly thereafter, her final words are "Svengali… Svengali… Svengali," which can be interpreted either as a confirmation of the monoideism causing her absolute submission, or as an accusation in which, in a final flash of lucidity, she is able to point to the actual culprit behind her automatic behavior and actions.[1020]

To ground the complete alienation of the subject in "realist" medical discourse, Du Maurier's text uses the vocabulary of hypnotic dissociation and the "dual consciousness" paradigm, as it was found in the work of Boris Sidis, Morton Prince, and Pierre Janet. As Gecko describes at the end of the novel, hypnosis created—or revealed, depending on one's school of hypnotism—a second, dissociated personality in Trilby, of which the "ordinary" consciousness has no recollection.[1021] Indeed, as Gecko exclaims:

[1017] Du Maurier, 52.
[1018] Ibid., 53; 93.
[1019] Ibid., 282-283. Svengali's power over Trilby is so strong that by the end of the story, she is described as having "the obedience and devotion of a dog." Du Maurier, 246. The final scene of the portrait, beyond the Gothic trope of hypnosis operating from beyond the grave, draws on those of magnetic attraction and of the scopic invasiveness of the hypnotist. In *Trilby,* descriptions of Svengali's gaze are crucial on a narrative level, as "it is through the gaze, or her sustained eye contact with Svengali, that La Svengali is held entranced and 'conducted' in her public performances." Weliver, 256. Indeed, without the physical presence and eye contact of the hypnotist, Trilby is unable to sing: "Svengali would not be parted from her for a minute, or trust her out of his sight." Du Maurier, 246.
[1020] Du Maurier, 284.
[1021] Indeed, in Du Maurier's text, "Trilby's waking state and her hypnotized state are so discrete from one another that there is no overlap in her memory at all." Pintar and Lynn, 7. This split is confirmed in numerous passages, for instance, when The Laird exclaims, unable to reconcile the old Trilby and the cold, remote behavior of La Svengali: "It's not Trilby—I swear! She could never have done that—It's not *in* her! And it's another face altogether—I'm sure of it!" After Svengali's death, Trilby herself seems to suffer from post-hypnotic amnesia, which reinforces split between her hypnotic (forgotten) self and her present (amnesic) self: "Struck *me! rehearsing? ...*what are you talking about, dear Taffy? Svengali never *struck* me! He was kindness itself—always! And what should *I* rehearse? … *I* never sang at any theater. … It all seems like a bad dream! *Was* it a dream I wonder? … You're dreaming Little Billee—you're taking me for somebody else." Here, the use of italics in the text, especially in connection with the first-person pronoun, serves to reinforce this split on a formal level. Du Maurier, 235; 255.

> There were two Trilbys. There was the Trilby you knew, who could not sing one single note in tune. She was an angel of paradise... with one wave of his hand over her—with one look of his eye—with a word—Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, his Trilby—and make her do whatever he liked ... you might have run a red-hot needle into her and she would not have felt it. He had but to say 'Dors!' and she suddenly became an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could produce wonderful sounds—just the sounds he wanted, and nothing else—and think his thoughts and wish his wishes—and love him at his bidding with a strange, unreal factitious love.[1022]

As we saw in Chapter 1, this split is conceived as one between two separate, isolated and alternating personalities, which enjoy continuous existence. As in the work Janet, here too the second consciousness can "develop so independently of the main consciousness as to rival with it for bodily control, transforming into a walking, talking second personality.[1023] Indeed, "When Svengali's Trilby was singing—or seemed to *you* as if she were singing—*our* Trilby had ceased to exist ... our Trilby was fast asleep ... in fact, *our* Trilby was *dead*.'[1024] In the novel, the idea that the "real" Trilby's existence continued, "under" that of the second consciousness of La Svengali, is confirmed, when "our Trilby" reappears at the end of the text after Svengali's death. This "original" identity reappears having retained the integrality of her emotional and intellectual capacities, except for the post-hypnotic amnesia which denies her all recollection of her actions while La Svengali was operating.

2.2.3.2. Underlying Late Victorian Anxieties

In *Trilby,* descriptions of hypnosis provide the necessary vocabulary and imagery allowing for the verbalization—in quasi-Freudian displacement—of three central Victorian anxieties. Pointing to the fragility of the conscious self, they also reveal underlying preoccupations about the foreign "alien" and Jewishness, crowd psychology, and female sexuality.

Antisemitism

First of all, in its descriptions of Svengali, Du Maurier's text incorporates and perpetuates the antisemitic discourse of the 1890s, according to which Jewish people were "contaminating the mind and body of gentiles, as well as controlling everything from the stock market to public taste in art" and were "routinely cast as financial wizards, omniscient seers or mysteriously omnipotent

[1022] Du Maurier, 298.
[1023] Jill Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium: Feminine Channeling, the Occult, and Communication Technologies, 1859–1919* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 123.
[1024] Du Maurier, 298-299.

bankers."[1025] Indeed, as Pick has convincingly argued, a great part of the fear-inducing dimension of Svengali's character is linked to his Jewishness:

> The image of the bewitching and inveigling Jew brought together a range of fears: not only of exploitation and parasites, but the prospect of a kind of enchantment, in which an abject and dirty alien figure successfully entered into and distorted the victim's mind and body. The Svengalian narrative brought together two widely rehearsed historical concerns: the hypnotic man's wrongful possession of the woman *and* the Jew's capacity to invade the gentile. The Jew at issue here was a fantasized object into which a variety of psychologically unwanted features was projected. But via the image of hypnosis, the reviled and envious figure was then, as it were, imaginatively reinternalized, perceived as a terrifying psychic 'insider', the resurgent master in the house of the unsuspecting gentile's ego.[1026]

In *Trilby*, Svengali is described as an unclean, cunning and repulsive character. As in one of Balzac's novels, his physical traits serve to represent moral aspects:

> He was very shabby and dirty … his thick, heavy, languid, lusterless black hair fell down behind his ears on to his shoulders, in that musician-like way that is so offensive to the normal Englishman. He had bold, brilliant black eyes, with long heavy lids, a thin, sallow face, and a beard of burnt-up black, which grew almost from his under eyelids ... He went by the name of Svengali, and spoke fluent French with a German accent and humorous German twists and idioms, and his voice was very thin and mean and harsh, and often broke into a disagreeable *falsetto*.[1027]

In these antisemitic descriptions, Jewishness is portrayed as "strangerhood incarnated within the host culture," while Jews become a "receptacle for all those qualities it is comfortable to disown."[1028] Indeed, as Pick argues, they become a moral "lightning conductor" for unwanted parts of the self and uncontainable social forces, "the depository of what would otherwise be recognized as disintegrative forces within the community."[1029] In such discourses, "the internal negativity of society itself is channeled into the Jew."[1030]

On the other hand, Little Billee's "Jewish blood" is also described as a sign of creative genius and artistic potential, pointing to his latent kinship with Svengali. Indeed, Little Billee's painting is compared to Svengali's musical talent on equal terms: "his touch on either canvas or paper was like Svengali's on the keyboard—unique."[1031] As Elaine Showalter summarizes it, "Jewish blood, to use the peculiarly *fin-de-siècle* and Darwinian inflection of Du Maurier's text,

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[1025] Pick, *Svengali's Web*, 4.
[1026] Ibid., 222.
[1027] Du Maurier, 13, 1992 ed. Here, the lexical fields of darkness and artifice (which the Italian musical term "falsetto" reinforces) are combined with the evocation of Svengali as an alien parasite threatening to "contaminate" English and Gentile identities.
[1028] Pick 211. See for instance the description of Svengali "walking up and down the earth seeking whom he might cheat, betray, exploit, borrow money from, make brutal fun of, bully if he dared… was about as bad as they make'em." Du Maurier, 42.
[1029] Du Maurier, 212.
[1030] Ibid., 212.
[1031] Ibid., 55.

carries genius. Not only Svengali but the great singer Glorioli, and Little Billee himself, are influenced by it."[1032] Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Du Maurier switches perspectives, and "writes about the effects of anti-Semitism on Svengali's life and psyche; 'his life had been a long, hard struggle.'"[1033] Even so, the description of Svengali as a dangerous Jewish hypnotist corresponds to yet another "innumerable variations on the metaphors of unfitness, parasitism, vampirism, corrosion" which served to voice concerns about "the danger of racial difference—or racial fusion—in the age of Svengali."[1034]

Crowd Psychology

Secondly, *Trilby* uses hypnosis as a means to verbalize late nineteenth-century anxieties centered on the affective mimesis and suggestibility of the public occurring in crowd psychology.[1035] As Pick has shown, hypnosis "offered a language to conceptualize what was really going on in individuals and groups who had, as it were, lost their hearts and minds to politicians, lovers, musicians or enchanting theatrical performers."[1036] Such accounts, which underlined the ubiquity of imitation and fascination, echoed the theories which flourished in France at the end of the century and explored "the powerful hypnotic investment in all political and commercial relations, the bewitching features of the most material of objects and the most ephemeral of social

[1032] Showalter, "Introduction to *Trilby,"* xx.
[1033] Ibid., xx.
[1034] Pick, *Svengali's Web,* 202.
[1035] Crowd psychology—which developed with the work of Scipio Sighele in Italy (*La Folla Delinquente,* 1891) and in France, with that of Gabriel Tarde (*Les Lois de l'imitation,* 1890), Henry Fournial (*Essai Sur la Psychologie des Foules* 1892), and Gustave Le Bon (*Psychologie des Foules,* 1895)—emerged in part as a way to address the anxieties of the bourgeois individual after the French Revolution in the face of the "threat" of popular insurrection. The concepts of hypnosis, suggestibility, and imitation were used to explain public behavior and opinions, and the mutual influence among individuals in the crowd. In *The Laws of Imitation,* Tarde famously developed the concept of the "social tie" as imitation, and imitation as a form of "somnambulism": "the social fact is a relation of imitation"; and ""Imitation is a social tie for it is either dogma or power which binds men together." Gabriel Tarde. *The Laws of Imitation* (1890; New York: Henry Holt, The Mershon Company Press, 1903), 76-77; xvi; xxii. According to Gustave Le Bon, in the crowd, the individual "is no longer conscious of his acts. … As in the case of the hypnotised subject, at the same time that certain faculties are destroyed, others may be brought to a high degree of exaltation. Under the influence of a suggestion, he will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity. This impetuosity is the more irresistible in the case of crowds … the suggestion being the same for all the individuals of the crowd, it gains in strength by reciprocity." Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895; London: Macmillan, 1896), 7-8. As in a state of trance, individuals in crowds, whose individuality disappears, are likely to execute orders that they would not obey as isolated individuals. Mental contagion, the central feature of crowd formation, based on association of ideas, is conceptualized thanks to hypnosis and suggestibility, and its psychology and behaviour explained by "primitive" or "inferior" forms of evolution," also found in children and women. Ibid., 32.
[1036] Pick, 69.

exchanges."[1037] Gabriel Tarde's famous theorization of the social bond as imitation in *Les Lois de l'imitation,* for example, draws the analogy—as does the July 14th entry in Maupassant's *Horla*—between the citizen and the sleepwalker or hypnotic subject: "The social like the hypnotic state is only a form of dream, a dream of command and a dream of action. Both the somnambulist and the social man are possessed by the illusion that their ideas, all of which have been suggested to them, are spontaneous."[1038]

Rather than write about crowd psychology from a socio-political perspective, however, Du Maurier centered his reflection on the esthetic realm, limiting it to the opera stage and the question of the circulation of cultural artifacts (often described, as Weliver points out, with the vocabulary evolutionist psychology).[1039] Even so, the underlying fear of a manipulating force acting behind the movements of the crowd is a similar one: "Du Maurier did not write of urban riots, but of wild bourgeois passions at the theatre. Yet the fact that, behind the scenes, a foreign, low-tide Svengali could orchestrate the emotions of the audience hinted at this darker and more sinister world of group manipulations."[1040] Indeed, the opera stage is an ideal setting to represent the movements unconscious imitation, since the musical performance "transforms social interaction from artificial mannerisms into spontaneous, natural emotion."[1041]

[1037] Ibid., 82.

[1038] Tarde, *The Laws of Imitation,* 77. See *The Horla: "July 14*—It is idiotic, though, to be happy on schedule, on a day decreed by the government. The people are an imbecile herd, sometimes stupidly patient and sometimes ferociously rebellious. They are told, 'Have fun.' They have fun. They are told, 'Go fight with your neighbor.' They go fight…. Those who run it are also fools; but instead of obeying people, *they obey principles* … that is, ideas imagined to be definite and immutable, in this world where we are sure of nothing, since light is an illusion, since sound is an illusion." Maupassant, 16-17, emphasis added. This passage is also especially fitting Gustave Le Bon's contention that leaders are hypnotized by the ideas that "possess" them: **"**The leader has … himself been hypnotised by the idea, whose apostle he has since become. It has taken possession of him to such a degree that everything outside it vanishes, and that every contrary opinion appears to him an error or a superstition. An example in point is Robespierre, hypnotised by the philosophical ideas of Rousseau, and employing the methods of the Inquisition to propagate them. The leaders we speak of are more frequently men of action." Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind,* 72.

[1039] Weliver, 250.

[1040] Pick, 73.

[1041] In this contagious mimetic process of listening to the performance, "physiological associationism occurs through involuntary physical responses by the audience … Muscles involuntarily contracting, causing tears and laughter," and so on. This description "fit evolutionary biologists' descriptions of physiological associationism." Weliver, 250-251. In addition to the opera, the novel also describes the suggestive—hypnotic and harmonizing—powers of music in the context of religious ceremonies, where even "true Britons of very advanced liberal and religious opinions" are temporarily "converted." Du Maurier, 110. This same suggestive dimension of religion *via* music is found at the end of chapter VIII of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (see for instance: **"**They listened to the Gospel and the Credo… This faith on the part of others touched Bouvard in spite of his reason, and Pécuchet in spite of the hardness of his heart… Then burst forth a strain of gladness inviting the whole world to the feet of the King of Angels. Bouvard and Pécuchet involuntarily joined in it, and they felt, as it were, a new dawn rising in their souls." Flaubert, *Bouvard et Pécuchet,* 314-315. Here, when the Englishmen hear the beauty of the music during the religious ceremony, "their s*usceptible*

Therefore, during her performance, "it is not just music that Trilby communicates but the mesmeric state itself. By her enchanting song, she passes on her own fascination to her audience."[1042] On stage, La Svengali "draws together in unity an audience initially made up of "the most cynically critical people in the world,"[1043] with her "seductive" and "strangely sympathetic" voice that "drives you mad!," is "irresistible" and "forces itself on you."[1044] When she sings Chopin's "Impromptu in A flat"—"that wondrous song without words'—every note is "a gem of sound, linked to the next by a magic bond."[1045] Here, the mesmerizing effects are transmitted through musicality itself, through melody and harmony, rather than verbal utterances or suggestions. During the performance, Little Billee finds himself in a trance: "he believed himself to be fast asleep … and was trying his utmost not to wake," and "seemed to be looking inward at some transcendent dream of his own," with a "smile almost idiotic in rapture."[1046] And indeed, at the end of the show, bathing in a general oceanic feeling, the united audience seems to be under a spell of its own and begins to act just automatically as Trilby: "all the fellows went mad and gave her their watches and diamond studs and gold scarf-pins… I was just as mad myself… it's the particular twang of her voice I suppose."[1047] In these passages, Du Maurier's text also gestures toward its own power as a work of art to affect suggestible audiences. As Pick notes, in Du Maurier's evocation of collective euphoria—as well as "gossip, ventriloquism, exploitation and stardom"—the novel uncannily thematizes and "reflects, disturbs, interacts with its own overblown reception."[1048]

Furthermore, with these descriptions of audience's responses, *Trilby* can also be considered as an oblique theorization of "the natural affinity between mesmerism and capitalism."[1049] Indeed,

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hearts soon melted at the beautiful music … and they were *quickly in unison* with all the rest." In the scene of the Christmas mass, "the singing human voice had especially strange powers to penetrate into his innermost depths." Du Maurier, 110-111.

[1042] Galvan, *The Sympathetic Medium*, 106.

[1043] Du Maurier, 159. As Weliver argues, because her music is "irresistible and programmatic," it leads the audience to temporarily shed the artifices of social mores, "forcing a group to remember a natural state and stripping away the mannerisms of a group." Weliver, 251. Indeed, at the end of her performances, the crowd forms a unity, not a collection of individuals: "The many-headed rises as one, and waves its hats and sticks and handkerchiefs, and stamps and shouts." Ibid., 220.

[1044] Du Maurier, 211; 169; 218.

[1045] Ibid., 213.

[1046] Ibid., 213; 215.

[1047] Du Maurier, 171

[1048] Pick, 36. Similarly, Jonathan Freedman has noted the "mimetic and pedagogical" relationship between the "wildly enthusiastic" response of the fictional audience and the "similarly demonstrative historical audiences that viewed the dramatized version of *Trilby* in America." Freedman, quoted by Vrettos in *Somatic Fictions,* 103.

[1049] Galvan, 106.

by describing La Svengali's fans as spontaneously compelled to hand over their wealth, Du Maurier "never lets us forget the commercial stakes of Trilby's performance," which is also "dramatized as a kind of mesmerism."[1050] In her ability to hypnotize the audience, Trilby "prefigures and exaggerates the modern tendency to link mass communication to mesmeric domination."[1051] This reworking of the old fluidist concept of circulation into a *fin-de-siècle* representation of communication—where it is now artifacts, entertainment, performances and commodities that circulate—has led critics like Jonathan Freedman to call *Trilby* a "remarkable adumbration of twentieth-century mass culture theory."[1052]

Female Sexuality

Finally, in *Trilby,* portrayals of the hypnotized subject as passive and helpless go together with the unformulated fear, and simultaneous desire to contain, female sexuality.[1053] The anxieties surrounding Trilby's succumbing to Svengali's manipulative powers and her marriage to him can be interpreted as more general preoccupation with the dangers of sexual corruption and moral violation. Indeed, during the late nineteenth century it was strongly feared that "sexual conquests amounting to rape might be facilitated by the trance: sexual violence concealed by the appearance of mutual agreement within the hypnotic couple."[1054] And indeed, under much of Svengali's threatening discourse lie undertones of sexual violence and erotic desire. This can be felt for example when he describes his quasi-hallucinatory morbid fantasies—his "vicious imaginations"—of Trilby's corpse exhibited in a "little mahogany glass case" in the Musée de

[1050] Ibid., 107.
[1051] In *The Sympathetic Medium*, Galvan even compares her to "a broadcast or mass medium, combining the power to record information with the power to disseminate it." Galvan, 106-107.
[1052] Jonathan Freedman, *The Temple of Culture: Assimilation and Anti-Semitism in Literary Anglo-America.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101.
[1053] Indeed, as Pamela Thurschwell has noted, at the end of the nineteenth century "the sexual is being constructed amidst wide-ranging doubts about the efficacy of individual agency in relation to the invasive potential of art, literature fashion, new technologies, mass media, political movements, and advertising…The hypnotic aesthete threatens an eroticized, potentially soul-sucking manipulation of his audience through style as well as sex, and through market choices, as well as hypnotic imposition." Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 38-40.
[1054] Pick, 95; 97. Furthermore, as Weliver notes, "part of the Victorian fascination with the image of singing woman was the inherent difficulty of distinguishing whether she was angel or siren." Weliver, 7. And indeed, Trilby is a fallen woman, who has inherited "all of the virtues but one." Du Maurier, 65. For critics like Thurschwell, her "palimpsestic history" of trauma is in great part what makes her "vulnerable to the hypnotic effects of Svengali," since "she is a barrier that has already been broken." Thurschwell, 51. Furthermore, since nervous diseases such as neuralgia were "explicitly connected" to hysteria in Victorian medical texts, Trilby's her migraines can be interpreted as symptoms which convert and express in somatic form her traumatic history, likely "caused by uncompromising, Victorian values.' Weliver, 259.

Médecine, as if she were to complete Charcot's anatomic-pathological collection at the Salpêtrière.[1055] Of course, the magnetotrope is also used to describe Trilby's own attractiveness: "grace, charm, magnetism—whatever the nameless seduction should be called that she possessed to such an unusual degree," confirming the idea that fears about hypnosis are used to express and process underlying concerns about female sexuality and independence.[1056]

Nevertheless, although in the eyes of Taffy, the Laird and Little Billee, Svengali's influence upon "our Trilby" is monstrous and morally corruptive, upon closer inspection, it seems that her objectification occurs well before Svengali lays his hands on her. For instance, as Du Maurier's biographer Leonée Ormond notes, "by sitting as a model for many of the artists in Paris, Trilby has already been appropriated as an object before Svengali ever sees her."[1057] Indeed, as Thurschwell has shown, "in the economy of the novel, Trilby's body is aestheticized, dissected and evaluated in market terms."[1058] Early on in the narrative, her body is "mutilated and fetishized" by the gaze of the male painters, who "reduce her to a perfect foot, larynx or mouth."[1059] According to Showalter, such fragmentation can be seen as displacements of and defenses against a potentially terrifying female sexuality."[1060]

In this sense, the attempts of the British painters to "save" Trilby from Svengali can also be interpreted as attempts to maintain control over female sexuality, and keep her confined to domestic roles—such as working as a *blanchisseuse de fin,* her "clean old trade"—which is "predestined" for her, as it was for Zola's Gervaise.[1061]

Indeed, Du Maurier's text constantly emphasizes Trilby's "almost too exuberant joyousness and irrepressible vitality," which the male characters all strive to contain by shaping

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[1055] Du Maurier, 92.
[1056] Ibid., 261. Trilby indeed possesses her own hypnotic powers, which appear in the text well before she turns into La Svengali. For instance, in passages describing the effect of Trilby's gaze on Little Billee, the trope of hypnotic attraction and absorption serves to describe romantic love: "Little Billee would look up… and find her grey eyes *fixed on him with an all-enfolding gaze, so piercingly, penetratingly*… that… in a waking dream, he would remember that his mother had often looked at him like that." Du Maurier, 65, emphasis added. Further on, her eyes are also described as "twin grey stars—or rather planets" which gave of light "which was not entirely their own." Du Maurier, 90. Other characters also fall under her hypnotic 'spell': Marta is "bound" to her "hand and foot… by a kind of slaving adoration." Once Trilby is no longer a threat to her son's social status, Mrs. Bagot—whose "quick susceptibility to such impressions was just as keen as her son's"—, is "fascinated and entranced" by Trilby's "childlike simplicity," calling her "irresistible" and asking "didn't you meet… anybody that *wasn't* fond of you?" Du Maurier, 266; 274.
[1057] Leonée Ormond, "Introduction" to *Trilby* (London: J.M. Dent, 1992), xi.
[1058] Thurschwell, 53.
[1059] Showalter, xiv.
[1060] Ibid., xiv.
[1061] Du Maurier, 263.

her into expected and gendered Victorian forms of life.[1062] From the beginning of the novel, the three painters take it upon them to give Trilby the proper, "English" education she has not received: "They lent her books—English books: Dickens, Thackeray, Walter Scott. She grew more English everyday; and that was a good thing."[1063] This leads Trilby to experience a "new born feeling of shame" when Little Billee walks in on her posing in the nude in a painting studio, his moral outrage leading her to question the modeling job that up until then, had posed no moral dilemma to her.[1064] Later on, when Mrs. Bagot—Little Billee's mother—convinces Trilby to refuse her son's marriage proposal for reasons purely based on social class, Trilby becomes "the one sinner that repenteth" and out of love, gives up her hopes of marriage.[1065] Once she has been "set" in her "proper"—that is, moral and social—place, the best prospect she can hope for, rather than marrying him, is becoming Little Billee's "servant."[1066]

In this sense, although they are not explicitly mentioned as such in the text, becoming La Svengali offers tremendous secondary benefits for Trilby, allowing her to break away from the rigidly predetermined forms of life that British society attempts to force her into. These benefits—although the Victorian male painters can only interpret in terms of moral corruption and violation, and the text as automatism with undertones of hysteria—might thus also be read as emancipatory. In any case, in light of this analysis, the demonizing of Svengali and anxiety-ridden discourse about hypnotic seduction in *Trilby* can be interpreted as attempts to keep sexuality contained, and maintain women in the roles attributed to them by male-dictated Victorian moral and social values.

2.2.3.3. Feminist Readings of Trilby: Hypnosis as Activity

Unlike *The Parasite*, by representing a female victim of a male hypnotist, *Trilby* seems to perpetuate, rather than disrupt, gender roles that structure the history of hypnosis up until the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, recent feminist reception of the novel—which emphasizes the agency of the female character who remains 'voiceless' in the text for lack of access to her inner life—reveals that Trilby is perhaps more active than it seems. If this is true, then the conception of

[1062] Ibid., 90.
[1063] Ibid., 64.
[1064] Ibid., 82. Indeed, such moral guilt and turmoil never occurred before Trilby undergoes Little Billee's disapproval. As she explains: "it seemed as natural for me to sit as for a man. Now I see the awful difference." Ibid., 85.
[1065] Ibid., 128.
[1066] Ibid., 133.

hypnosis should not be reduced to the dangers we have mentioned so far but extended to incorporate the activity of the subject. In this final section, I propose that such a reading of hypnosis in Du Maurier's text is possible. As I hope to show, beyond the male characters' opinions and the narrator's explicit discourse, rather than an unnatural state of pure alienation, hypnosis can also be conceived as a tool which brings out, reveals and strengthens Trilby's natural potential. In fact, some critics have ever argued that "Trilby is *the* great artist of this story," since hypnosis "turns her consciousness back towards her inner self, the source of her creative genius."[1067] Instead of the domination of one mind over another, the hypnotic relations in *Trilby* have also been read in terms of mutual dependency, and even, to a certain extent, to cooperation between Trilby and Svengali.[1068] Such a reading would then confirm the hypothesis by which Trilby is less a victim of hypnosis *per se* than of patriarchal, Victorian morality—that is, of "puritanism, the double sexual standard, normative views of gender and class, and established religion."[1069] In these readings, "far from being totally victimized by Svengali or upper-class judgements, Trilby rises above attempted methods of containment" and has "some measure of control, though the men in charge of telling her story, conducting her performance … might not be aware of the woman's participation, however slight."[1070]

Indeed, some aspects of the novel point to Trilby's agency and ability to resist male attempts at control. For Phyllis Weliver, for instance, Svengali "does not succeed in mastering Trilby."[1071] In fact, for her, "in all late Victoria novels depicting mesmerizing music masters, the female subject cannot be fully mesmerized against her will."[1072] Indeed, Trilby's strength and

[1067] Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love, The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels 1840-1900.* (London: Reakton Books, 1996), 96.
[1068] For example, Weliver emphasizes the shared ownership, rather than pure recuperation, of Trilby's voice: "While the narrator and the male artists believe female vocality to be controlled by male manipulation, ownership of Trilby's voice is actually shared while she is mesmerized and then appropriated by Trilby after Svengali dies." Weliver, 247. Furthermore, these readings also argue that Trilby's despair after the rejection from Little Billee's family and the death of her brother explains her voluntary *choice* to follow Svengali, rather than her passive submission to him: "Trilby disrupts the paradigm of control that he has imagined because *she chooses him.*" Weliver, 257, emphasis added. This confirms the idea that her passivity is a construction that neglects her own participation in the creation of La Svengali, a role which is only acceptable for her as long as she appears to be an automaton acting as an instrument for a—male—conductor.
[1069] Showalter, xvii. In this reading, "Trilby's illness, like Billee's results from the interference of upper-class mores instead of Svengali's mesmerism." Weliver 257-258.
[1070] Weliver, 261.
[1071] Ibid., 257.
[1072] Ibid.

mutability has been emphasized as proof of her resistance and autonomy.[1073] For Nina Auerbach, Trilby's "power of metamorphosis defines her character" and "counter-point[s] her passive and stupefied role in the plot."[1074] This mutability operates on the physical level[1075] as well as on moral level, as her character bridges the gap between seemingly incompatible roles available to Victorian women: "as simultaneous siren and angel, she haunts Little Billee as an image of infinite change."[1076] Furthermore, through her singing, Trilby is also able to demonstrate further ability for metamorphosis and variation, which Auerbach considers as further proof of her agency: "Finally the role of magus and mythmaker passes to her. Her ability under hypnosis to ring endless variations upon familiar tunes is the power of her character to transform itself endlessly and, in so doing, to renew endlessly the world around her."[1077] As Weliver argues, rather than being a mere passive vessel or instrument, Trilby also "contributes more to La Svengali's performance than simply providing the physical instrument."[1078] On her deathbed, "she exercises her own will" by indicating her wish to sing again and requests a beat: "This is not an imitative automaton, but an equal who likes to sing."[1079] These readings are significant for our purposes as they convey an alternative sense of the hypnotic experience of a character whose interiority remains out of reach in Du Maurier's text. If Trilby's agency is preserved, this implies that she enters the state of hypnosis voluntarily and actively participates in the constitution of her experience. In claiming

[1073] Nina Auerbach describes her as a giantess, for whom "the novel's world is simply too small for her to live in," and arbors both masculine and feminine traits ("she would have made a singularly handsome boy") which defy pre-distributed gender roles in the text. Nina Auerbach, "Magi and Maidens: The Romance of the Victorian Freud." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (Winter 1981): 284.

[1074] For instance, throughout the text and before she becomes La Svengali, Trilby constantly switches language, occupations and lifestyles. Auerbach, 285-286., Hilary Grimes attributes this ability to switch between cultures as part of Trilby's history. For her, Gecko's belief that Svengali has created 'two Trilbys' is thus undermined by the fact that she is referred to as doubled long before she becomes La Svengali. Indeed, "Trilby speaking French and Trilby speaking English were two different beings." Her duality also is exemplified in her friendship with the three Englishmen, as she begins to divide her time between "being a French model for the body and being a friend and all-around helping hand" to the painters. Therefore, it is not hypnosis but Trilby's history and the culture in which she evolves that is the primary cause for the *splitting* occurring in her: "Trilby's self is doubled by her adoption of two cultures and languages, not by Svengali's hypnotic passes." Grimes, 78.

[1075] For instance, Little Billee muses about the "little innocent, pathetic, ineffable, well-remembered sweetness of her *changing face.*" Du Maurier, 223-4, emphasis added.

[1076] Auerbach, 285. By the end of the novel, both of these qualities have merged as Trilby is "simultaneously seductive and angelic"—qualities which are "celebrated" rather than cursed by the end of the story. Weliver, 274; 18.

[1077] Auerbach, 286.

[1078] Weliver also notes various examples which show that Trilby is more than a mere automaton under the control of Svengali. Drawing on the fact that while she sings on stage, Trilby displays one foot on a stool, just as she used to while modeling, Weliver argues that because her past identity and mannerisms are not abdicated while mesmerized, "Trilby's personality creates *at least part of her image as La Svengali*." Weliver, 264, emphasis added.

[1079] Weliver, 264.

that he has absolute control over his subject, then, Svengali himself is perhaps subject to narcissistic delusion and despite his technical mastery, to prevalent theoretical misconceptions about the nature and functioning of hypnosis itself.

One consequence of such readings is that, rather than simply instrumentalizing Trilby, Svengali has in fact—perhaps unknowingly—"helped to perfect" her musical ability and develop her own, preexisting, potential.[1080] This would explain why descriptions of Trilby's voice that precede her transformation into La Svengali already stress her natural predispositions for singing, despite her being tone-deaf.

In fact, contemporary reviews such as that of James Coates—author of a handbook titled *Human Magnetism or How to Hypnotise* (1904)—did defend the idea that hypnosis could be considered as a natural state which merely exacerbates the potential of the subject. In this sense, whereas Svengali claims to sing through Trilby, hypnosis actually merely "expresses aspects of Trilby's natural state" just as it elicits natural response in her audience.[1081] Indeed, as Coates argues, emphasizing the natural dimension and pedagogical potential of hypnosis:

> I am quite willing to grant the impossibility of a tone-deaf girl becoming a brilliant diva; but the fact remains that many subjects give extraordinary display of faculty in hypnosis, which neither they nor their most intimate friends imagined them to possess. The operator must ever remember that whatever powers are displayed in hypnosis these must be innate, for hypnosis ... cannot create any faculty. Every human faculty, as well as those of sensation, can be stimulated or exalted in hypnosis. ... I may say that Trilby had her prototype in Manchester about fifty years ago, and Dr. Braid was the clever, but in this instance reputable Svengali.[1082]

Furthermore, for Coates, one enters hypnosis voluntarily: "the mesmerist is powerless to do anything 'contrary to the [subject's] will' and ultimately mesmerism only highlights the subject's innate disposition."[1083] It can thus be argued that hypnosis, as a form of training, "makes it possible for Trilby to learn and to overcome hearing deficiencies, just as Braid discovered in his experiments with deaf-mutes that qualities of hearing are often mind-induced, or at least curable though psycho-suggestion instead of being irreparable physiological defects."[1084] In this sense, Svengali does not act through her. Rather, "Trilby *evolves* from Svengali's training."[1085]

[1080] Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic,*78.
[1081] Weliver, 253.
[1082] Coates, *Human Magnetism,* 185.
[1083] James Coates, *Human Magnetism or How to Hypnotise: A Practical Handbook for Students of Mesmerism.* New revised edition (London: Nichols, 1904), 209.
[1084] Weliver, 264. Indeed, as Gecko explains that he and Svengali taught Trilby "for three years—morning, noon and night—six—eight hours a day," taking her voice "note by note." Du Maurier, 296.
[1085] Weliver, 268.

By describing hypnotism as "unnatural," the male characters are thus denying the natural potentialities which it contains and unleashes. Attributing her singing to Svengali's powers denies Trilby recognition for her own talent and technical prowess. In this sense, "by not recognizing that Trilby may become extraordinary when mesmerized and not crediting her own powers of creativity," the British painters construct her as a passive victim, in yet another attempt to "manage her power and sexuality, just as they sought to contain it by making her responsible for her modeling and fallen status."[1086] Emphasizing the benefits that Trilby receives from becoming La Svengali therefore reinforces her agency, redefines hypnosis, and "debunks" the idea that hypnotism alone is responsible for Trilby's singing."[1087]

Following this conception, distribution of authority can be disrupted and overturned *with* hypnosis, rather than against it. Rather than reinforce her servitude, hypnosis can participate in breaking social conventions for Victorian woman, as Svengali "trains Trilby to break boundaries that normally constrained female speech in sensation fiction," allowing her to step outside the private sphere and produce music publicly and professionally.[1088]

Rather than pure domination, the Trilby-Svengali rapport can also be conceived as a form of cooperation, in which "the mesmerist/hypnotist and the mesmerized/hypnotized share the site of power," and a relation akin to mutual dependency emerges.[1089] For instance, "La Svengali" can be conceived as a collaborative creation that merges the talents of both Trilby and Svengali. As Weliver argues, for instance: "two people are involved in the creation of La Svengali, and they share one will: to sing. In 'La Svengali' therefore, a superior being to either mesmerizer or subject is created, and it is one whose identity depends upon her female voice."[1090] Indeed, Svengali cannot succeed alone, as he is "absolutely without voice, beyond the harsh, hoarse, weak raven's croak he used to speak with."[1091] Furthermore, as Galvan observes, Svengali must also operate through Trilby for reasons that have "as much to do … with her femininity as with his ethnic difference," as he initially inspires repulsion and fear in the community and audience he attempts to conquer.[1092] In the end, both "need each other to fulfill their desires to sing," that is, to produce the work of art

[1086] Ibid., 262.
[1087] Ibid., 260.
[1088] Ibid., 269.
[1089] Grimes, 2016, 64; 78
[1090] Weliver, 266.
[1091] Du Maurier, 42.
[1092] Galvan, 105.

and the aesthetic experience.[1093] The music-master and hypnotist is thus dependent on the performer, just as the text depends on the reader in order to be actualized.[1094] Their merging in the single name "La Svengali" indicates that have become "subsumed by one another."[1095] Indeed, as the popularity of La Svengali increases, their identities become "easily and increasingly interchangeable" and after Svengali's death, once the connection between them is severed, "neither is able to withstand the fallout of power that ensues."[1096] Therefore, in *Trilby,* hypnotism *per se* is not held responsible for moral and social degradation. Rather, downfalls' such as Trilby should be attributed to social and environmental factors on the one hand, and the *abuse* of power by self-interested and power-hungry practitioners on the other, as well as to the novelistic necessity and (mis)conceptions of hypnosis to which her character is submitted.[1097]

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In his novel, Du Maurier both reflected and helped to shape public anxieties of his time, producing a simplification of hypnosis that, like an illustration from *Punch*, was passed on in

[1093] Weliver, 266.
[1094] For Hilary Grimes, Svengali and Trilby have in essence hypnotized one another. Indeed, Svengali becomes "infected" with Trilby, his obsessive love—"how beautiful you are! It drives me mad! I adore you!"—echoes the *idée fixe* he previously planted in her mind about him. Grimes, 2016, 72; Du Maurier 104, 1994 ed.
[1095] Grimes, 78.
[1096] Ibid., 78. Simultaneously, Du Maurier's text poses the question of the reader's response—her implication, participation in the discourses circulating in the narrative, her own activity and passivity, and suggestibility. For Athena Vrettos, for instance, *Trilby* leaves the reader two highly gendered, options: either one becomes a "voyeur" who watches Trilby's performance "from a stance of esthetic distance and sexual desire," or one can "overidentify with the heroine and become feminized, indeed hypnotized, by her performance into a state of emotional collapse." In this alternative between distance (aestheticization) and proximity (absorption, mimetic contagion), the hypnotic powers of literature reveal themselves. For Vrettos, these 'powers' lie, precisely, in the ambiguous structure of fear and fascination at the heart of Du Maurier's representation of hypnosis : "Du Maurier shapes the scene so that we, along with the other spectators, are encouraged to respond to her deathbed performance with both fascination and horror." For Vrettos, hypnotic "horrors" satisfy our own voyeuristic fantasies, scopic drives and desire. Indeed, the power of Svengali's vision to ultimately "transcend the grave" and claim Trilby as his instrument during her moment of transition from life to death—like Valdemar's own suspension between life and death—creates "an imaginative link between aesthetic appreciation, medical experimentation and necrophilia. By revealing the uncanny source of our aesthetic pleasure, Du Maurier thus "questions how we view what we view, identifying both our own susceptibility (like Trilby's and her various audiences) to readerly suggestion and our compromised innocence in viewing the scenes before us." By emphasizing our own role in such economies of vision, Du Maurier therefore "simultaneously encourages and disempowers the sympathetic audience." Vrettos, 103-105.
[1097] As Weliver has noted, "*Trilby* does not critique mesmerism … but rather Svengali's abuse of his human instrument and the social codes that drive Trilby to seek a cure from Svengali." Weliver, 261.

ulterior (mis)conceptions of the practice.[1098] In Du Maurier, as in Maupassant and Doyle, "cultural assumptions that were tied up with the earlier technique and practice were transferred to the hypnotic relation as well, regardless of the fact that practitioners of hypnosis who were working at the time the novel was written took particular pains to distinguish their practices from those associated with mesmerism."[1099] These *fin-de-siècle* tropes of absolute domination, somnambular automatons, and quasi-supernatural hypnotic phenomena are far from having disappeared, as "centuries-old assumptions about the hypnotic relation and the nature of hypnosis" survive today to varying degrees in popular belief and practice, despite being "widely discredited by researchers who reject them as myths."[1100]

Nevertheless, narratives such as *Trilby*, *The Parasite* or *Le Horla* also used fascination as a corollary to fear, producing ambiguous responses in their readers in the same way that their villains, both frightening and fascinating, "cloud[ed] the moral and psychological oppositions on which their stories simultaneously depended: conscious/unconscious, man/woman, inside/outside, west/east, ape/human, subject/object, virtue/vice, Jew/gentile, the self-possessed/the hypnotized, and so on."[1101]

Indeed, one of the most fundamental structures revealed in the late-century representations of hypnosis is the inextricable relations between fear and fascination for the same object. As Daniel Pick has noted, "in the localized case of Svengali, and in the phenomenon of mesmerism in general, one repeatedly encounters this ambiguous 'structure of feeling.'"[1102] The representations we have examined in this chapter are fictionally (re)imagined extensions of the medical hypotheses and unanswered questions that the field of hypnotism opened up, as early as the 1784 commission.

As Pintar and Lynn have noted, the assumptions about hypnotism unveiled in these texts—and still surviving to this day—"are important in this history of hypnosis not because they are damaging misconceptions that need to be once and for all unmasked as false—but because they have become *mythical*, meaning that they are cultural images," which can in turn serve to represent,

[1098] Indeed, the myth of Svengali is constructed on sharp, simplified, binaries. It "encodes a specific *kind* of malign alliance and establishes a clear division of roles between the participants: active/passive, corrupter/corrupted, hypnotizer hypnotized." Pick, 215.
[1099] Pintar and Lynn, 10.
[1100] Ibid., 2.
[1101] Pick, 222. As Weliver argues "Just as upper-class ideals are set up only to be redefined in the course of the novel, so is Trilby's performance first depicted in terms of passive female display but is then redefined and owned by Trilby herself." Weliver, 247.
[1102] Pick, 209.

conceptualize or symbolize aspects of our form of life that they illuminate.[1103] The myths surrounding hypnosis reveal more about the psychological, esthetic, cultural or ethical tensions and anxieties which produced them, than about the practice of hypnosis *per se.*

In this sense, one can draw out several key aspects which traverse each of the texts that we have examined so far, regardless of the mode of representation of hypnosis—parodic, enthusiastic, fearful or fascinated—that was used.

First, each story functions on a disruption of the initial balance and characters' preconceptions of the relations between the material and the spiritual. As Bertrand Méheust has noted, with this specific question, nineteenth-century fiction overpowered reality by *literalizing* and radicalizing elements which were merely hypothesized or evoked as possibilities in the medical texts. The stakes are especially high for many of the characters who believe they are on the brink of finally understanding the relations between mind and matter, such as Conan Doyle's Gilroy (who is writing a paper titled "The Relation between Mind and Matter"), Balzac's Raphael Valentin (who has composed a treatise titled "Theory of the Will"), Poe's Doctor Templeton (who speaks of being "on the verge of some stupendous psychal discoveries"), and Maupassant's Dr. Parent (who believes he is "on the point of discovering one of the most important secrets of nature").[1104] The fictional space is the ideal, and perhaps only, space in which to stage this power of *expansion* that hypnotic phenomena impose upon materialist positions.

Second, in each of these stories, the narrative authority is in constant negotiation with the authority of medical discourse, alternating between varying degrees of criticism, conflict, alignment or complicity. In some occasions, medical authority and the apology of hypnosis overlap completely, as in *Le Horla*, where the Dr. Parent both represents scientific progress and practices hypnosis himself. In other occasions, the figure of the medical doctor becomes the object from which the narrative voice distances itself, in an effort to destabilize the certainties of orthodox medical discourse and scientific positivism. Often aligned with an initially skeptical position such as that of Flaubert's Dr. Vaucorbeil—one of the rare doctors whose skepticism is never renounced and who never "converts" to mesmerism—the medical gaze, when confronted with the "fact" of hypnotism, serves to guarantee the "reality" of the phenomena under observation. In cases where the sanity and reliability of the narrator is compromised but the narrative remains framed by the

[1103] Pintar and Lynn, 2.
[1104] Doyle, *The Parasite,* 53; Balzac, *La Peau de Chagrin,* Poe, *Mesmeric Revelation,* 224; Maupassant, *Le Horla,* 17.

guarantee of this "objective," medical perspective—as in the first version of *The Horla*—the "realism" of the text rests on the authority—or fragility—of a diagnosis which either confirms the claims of the character and thus extends the domain of science, or dismisses them as the pathological manifestation of insanity. In the second version of Maupassant's *Le Horla* and Conan Doyle's *The Parasite*, the diary entries narrated in the first-person remove such framework, dramatically increasing the undecidability already at the heart of hypnotic phenomena, transforming the conflict between narrative voice and medical discourse into a purely internal, psychical conflict. In all cases, figures of rationality—the skeptical or "converted" doctor, and the rational observer or experimenter—strengthen hypnosis' claims to rationality, renegotiating the boundaries of what is to be included in the realm of Nature and its laws.

Finally, whereas in the medical field, the dematerialization and transformation of mesmerism into hypnotism was linked to an increase in scientific legitimacy, in fictional literature, this movement did not follow such a linear process. While early and mid-century texts, with their curious enthusiasm, used mesmerism for philosophically oriented inquiries, the late-century texts used hypnotism to process fears centered on individual and collective dispossession. It is worth noting that Doyle and Du Maurier's anglophone texts, although they still conveyed racial prejudice about the foreign other, did complicate the classic image of the male operator and passive female subject which remained a French *topos* well into the twentieth century. As feminist readings of *Trilby* have shown, hypnosis can also reveal the creative potential of the subject, thereby undermining narratives of pure passivity.

As the century progressed, the acknowledgment of the ubiquity of suggestion *in general* helped popular and medical culture move away from conceptions of hypnosis as a pathological state which only concerns vulnerable, hysteric or neurotic women. As the roles of subject and operator became more permutable—as seen in Conan Doyle—the stage was set for a practice no longer constituted of susceptible subjects and powerful operators, but rather, of hypnotic phenomena and utterances, impacting all individuals, regardless of genetic predisposition, gender roles or cultural capital. With the rise of modern technology, media, transportation and advertising that made the use of suggestion visible all over the public space, hypnosis in the twentieth century was theorized as a phenomenon potentially undergone by all individuals, including "healthy" ones. Once overshadowed by the birth and rise of psychoanalysis however, hypnosis quickly lost its scientific legitimacy. Rather than an epistemological concept serving to probe into the nature of

the mind, hypnosis now served as a *metaphor* to explore esthetically and politically, rather than scientifically or purely medically, oriented questions.

After the turn of the century, while hypnosis no longer served as a central means of psychological investigation, it still left behind a haunted/ing trace of *fascination,* that would be picked up again, this time in the aesthetic realm, by the Surrealist poets. Just like—as we showed in Chapter 1—hypnosis had to transform itself and reappeared unnamed in a variety of ways in the therapeutic setting, in the realm of literature, it survived the turn of the century by becoming a tool for artistic creation, rather than an object of representation. As the Surrealists experimented with inductions and automatic writing as a means to create a spontaneous work of art mimicking the automatism of the mesmerized subject, hypnosis transformed once more, reappeared structurally and formally in the very process writing, becoming linked to the formal experimentations that appeared at the beginning of the century.

Furthermore, after the birth and rise of psychoanalysis, hypnosis in literature ceased to be directly associated with medical questions and became a more indirect means for novelists to explore the mechanisms of suggestion in a variety of fields, beyond the field of mental science. As we will show in the next chapter, although it no longer served to pose the central epistemological, philosophical and psychological questions that it did during the nineteenth century, hypnosis can nevertheless be traced, albeit unnamed, in the psychological processes underlying aesthetic creation and reception itself, in the "hypnotic" power of the literary text. As I will argue in Chapter 3, the hypnotic dimension of literature, and novelistic prose in particular, lies not in the submission of one subjectivity to another, but rather, in the experience of absorption into fictional worlds, and in the suggestive dimension of literary evocation itself. This is why, rather than discuss the relations between hypnosis and writing, I will now turn to the analogy between the state of hypnosis and the act of reading itself, focusing especially on novelistic prose, and its ability—shared with hypnosis—to conjure up, imaginary universes out of words.

Chapter 3. The Literary Dimension of Hypnosis and Hypnotic Dimension of Literature.

The house was quiet and the world was calm.
The reader became the book; and summer night
Was like the conscious being of the book
—Wallace Stevens, 1972.

Our conceptions expand—we become part of what we behold
—Thomas Cole, 1836.

I imagined that God had created light so that people could read, and through reading, see other worlds.
—Evariste Galois, 1811-1832.

A book is the dialogue it establishes with its reader… not an isolated entity: it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable relationships.
—Jorge Luis Borges, 1964.

Among other absorptive activities, the experience of finding oneself immersed in the world of a novel is a common trope, which hypnotists use with their patients or audience, before beginning hypnosis *proper*.[1105] The purpose of this analogy—between hypnotic trance and the act of reading—is to dismantle and reframe potentially limiting beliefs which might impede hypnotic immersion, and reassure the subject by invoking the existence of a "common everyday trance," that is, the variety of immersive activities in which humans regularly engage, and from which they emerge intact.[1106] This common everyday trance refers to any activity—aesthetic or ordinary—

[1105] In therapeutic contexts, the analogy between novel reading and hypnosis is therefore already a suggestion—that of the harmless, natural nature of hypnotic trance—and can become part of the strategic, "illusory" dimension involved in the induction of the hypnotic state.

[1106] Such activities include as driving, contemplating nature, beholding a painting, watching a film, walking or sitting meditation, being engaged in conversation, etc. As Roustang notes, "A book, a film, a voice, an inquiry can spark our interest, absorb or fascinate us." Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?*, 66. For Rossi, "in everyday life, consciousness is in a continual state of flux between the general reality orientation and the momentary micro dynamics of trance," and therefore, "trance experience and hypnotherapy are simply the extension and utilization of these normal psychodynamic processes." Rossi, in *Hypnotic Realities. The Induction of Clinical Hypnosis and Forms of Indirect Suggestion* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1976), 230.

"wherein we are absorbed in a moment of inner reverie or preoccupation," and go about our daily routine "somewhat automatically," as "much of our attention is focused inward."[1107] In this sense, hypnotic trance is not exceptional but occurs spontaneously in the lives of human beings. It "resembles everyday experiences when one is so absorbed in something—a book, a film, some music or one's own daydreams—that one may not even respond to one's name when it is called."[1108]

The Analogy Between Reading Fiction and Hypnosis: Similarities and Differences

In this chapter, I will be focusing specifically on this type of aesthetic experience in order to underline parallels between hypnotic and novelistic immersion.[1109] At first glance however, the comparison between hypnosis and novel reading might not seem the most obvious choice, given the numerous other possible comparisons with various other illusionist or absorptive art forms.

For instance, hypnosis is more often compared to drama than it is to novels, given its performative dimension and its association with the question of simulation, which we discussed in Chapter 1.[1110] Furthermore, because hypnosis often involves a subject enthralled in mental imagery, a comparison with visual arts—such as painting, or cinema, in which images are in

[1107] Rossi, Ibid., 1.
[1108] Heap et al, *The Highly Hypnotizable Person*, 11.
[1109] In this chapter, we will be using the term "hypnosis" in this extended sense: "if we begin to realize that words, and other forms of communication, may cause an individual to turn inward and create a hallucinated world to which the individual responds, we have broadened our concept of hypnosis." In this context, the distinction between modern definitions of hypnotic trance and aesthetic absorption can sometimes be surprisingly difficult to pinpoint. Indeed, the definition of hypnosis as an introspective and imaginative response to language makes it difficult to distinguish from absorptive reading. For instance, hypnosis is defined as "a person turning inward and having an inner experience that becomes more profound or more important than the outer consensual reality … any transaction and communication that causes an individual to go into their own experiences and call upon their own imagination in order to respond." Steven Heller and Terry L. Steele, *Monsters and Magical Sticks, There's no such thing as Hypnosis?* (Temple, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1987), 38; 24.
[1110] See for instance: "No longer do the 'circus horses' of the Salpêtrière perform before visitors as in the palmy days of Charcot… Seldom indeed is the clinician witness to the elaborate and protracted hysterical fits whose theatrical features were drawn with artistic skill by Paul Richer." S. A. Kinnier Wilson, 1931, quoted in Mark Micale, "On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria. A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis." *Isis* 84, no. 3 (September 1993): 502. Regarding the theatrical and performative dimension of hypnosis, see G. Didi-Huberman, *The Invention of Hysteria,* M. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Affective Tie,* M. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria* and R. Leys, *Trauma: a Genealogy.* See also Haley: "Hypnotic subjects are often better subjects on stage when in a triangle with the audience than when in a dyad alone with the hypnotist." Jay Haley, The Contribution the Therapy of Milton H. Erickson," in *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1982), 12**.** Hypnotic subjects, like readers, can be compared to "audience members who can march up onto the stage and become various characters, altering the action by what they say and do in their roles." Brenda Laurel, *Computers as Theater* (Menlo Park, Ca: Addison Wesley, 1991), 16.

motion—might seem more *à propos* than with the novelistic genre.[1111] Of course, due to the inductive dimension of poetic verse and rhythm, the comparison with poetry—to which we will return further on—might also seem much more appropriate than with narrative prose.[1112] Finally, virtual reality and its interactive immersivity, where "we act within a world and experience it from the inside," might also appear as a much better candidate than novels—provided we are willing to consider it (if not as a "metaphor for total art" as Marie-Laure Ryan does) as an art form.[1113] Indeed, in its ability to create hallucinatory worlds, virtual reality offers a model which is extremely close to the hypnotic experience: both involve the activity of the subject and the experience of unmediated access to the virtual environment.[1114] Unlike cinema, where the screen cuts the viewer off from the fictional world, hypnosis and virtual reality directly immerse the subject, creating the impression of embodied localization in space, and allowing interaction from within the "virtual," mimetic universe.[1115]

[1111] See for instance: "A painting, it was claimed, had first to attract [*attire*r] and then to arrest [*arrêter*] and finally to enthrall [*attacher*] the beholder; that is, a painting had to call to someone, bring him to a halt in front of itself, and hold him there as if spellbound and unable to move." Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality,* 92. Wolf: "[Film is] the most powerful illusionist medium of our time," whose "performative multimediality and partial iconicity" cause a strong inducement of experiential illusion and immersion. See Werner Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)? Towards a Media-Conscious Theory of Media-Elicited Immersion as a Transmedial Phenomenon." in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 53; Terrone: "Films supplement the aesthetic illusion with a temporal component, and involve a temporal presentness without necessitating spatial presence. Presentness (unlike presence) is not perceptually neutralized by the surface of screen." Enrico Terrone, "Neither Here nor There, but Now: Film Experience and the Aesthetic Illusion," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 109; and Felski: "film will soon supplant the novel as the medium most often accused of lulling its viewers into a trance-like fascination with unreal worlds." Felski, *Uses of Literature,* 53. See Cavell, *The World Viewed*, *Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971); and Ingarden: "the spectator ceases to see the screen, and in its place sees in almost perceptual manner things and people" Roman Ingarden, *The Ontology of the Work of Art,* trans. J.T. Goldhwait (1962; Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 326.

[1112] Because it is centered on the imaginative process of immersion into fictional worlds, my scope of inquiry here focuses on the relations between modern indirect, permissive hypnosis and novelistic prose, and the shared poetic, narrative and fictional aspects of their discourse. This implies that we will not examine the trance-inducing aspects of poetry in the narrow sense, which, although undeniable, participate in a conception of hypnotic trance as a dulling, rather than a stimulation, of the recipient's awareness.

[1113] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media.* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 20. Indeed, Ryan argues that until the appearance of VR (a technology which offers "the synthesis of all media toward a total experience," the creation of a sense of immersion was the "prerogative of art." Ryan, Ibid, 114; and "Immersion vs. Interactivity: Virtual Reality and Literary Theory." *SubStance* 28, no. 2 (1999): 102.

[1114] "Far from being associated with passive immersion, semiotic transparency is conceived by VR developers as a way to facilitate interactivity." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 123.

[1115] See Cavell: "A screen is a barrier … it screens me from the world it holds—that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me—that is, screens its existence from me." Cavell, *The World Viewed,* 24. Like hypnosis, virtual reality implies an active simulative system which responds and produces non-iterable, different sequence of events with every experience. Like hypnosis, it is "not a narrative, but a narrative matrix… It is open to all the histories

In addition to this variety of other available comparisons, medium-based differences between novelistic texts and hypnotic communication further complicate our analogy. While the semiotic transparency of virtual reality facilitates a comparison with the immediacy of hypnotic hallucination, the visual deciphering of textual graphemes and material presence of the book-object reinforce the indirect, mediated process of novel reading, which involves analytic and interpretative acts, as well as the exercise of conscious awareness.[1116] Unlike the deeply relational nature of hypnotic *rapport* and communication, reading is also a silent and solitary act which temporarily cuts the reader off from social, intersubjective relations.[1117] When it is carried out professionally, or when it is "informed" and "sophisticated," reading often includes forms of aesthetic, critical, sometimes evaluative *distance,* which further broadens the gap between suggestible hypnotic subjects and the literary reader or critic.[1118] While aesthetic distance can be considered as "a consequence of the culturally acquired awareness of the fictional quality of the artifact … and of the illusionary status of the dominant effect induced by it," in hypnosis, this distance seems to become lost, and the distinction between illusion and delusion difficult to pinpoint.[1119]

From this standpoint, hypnosis and literature might appear two irreducible domains, pertaining respectively to the psychological and the textual. Any confusion of these on the part of

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that could develop out of a given situation," each session actualizing a potential story, like a book "which vanishes when the writing is complete." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 123.

[1116] Another difference is that while the reader holds a book which will still exist after it is put down, the hypnotic subject is submitted to a stream of immaterial and ephemeral oral utterances which disappear after the experience. Furthermore, while the immaterial text remains cut off from the empirical world of psychology and the ending of the novel is written in advance, the contingency of hypnotic interaction is governed by no such novelistic necessity. In this sense, modern hypnosis resembles improvisational art more than the novel, since its outcome is never predetermined and its attempts constantly exposed to possible failure, as both operator and subject are engaged in a process of discovery and co-construction rather than following a teleological track leading towards a predetermined goal.

[1117] "Novel reading requires prolonged solitude and stillness. It takes place in a context of isolation, if not physical confinement… [it] demands the singular concentration of the seated meditator, in whose silent awareness an encounter with consciousness itself unfolds." Yi-Ping Ong, *The Art of Being: Poetics of the Novel and Existentialist Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 8.

[1118] "The default position of contemporary criticism is best described as one of "*standing back*"—*keeping one's distance* from a work of art in order to place it in an explanatory frame." Felski, 57, emphasis added.

[1119] Werner Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction." *Style* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 331. Hypnotic hallucination and aesthetic absorption therefore seem to mobilize different forms or regimes of belief. As Gregory Currie suggests, what distinguishes the reading of fiction from nonfiction is perhaps not the activity of the imagination but the attitudes we adopt toward the content of what we "read": "make-belief in one case, belief in the other." Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 21.

the critic—any bridging of the gap between mind and text—might seem naïve or imprecise.[1120] Even worse, it runs the risk of committing two equally "sinful" acts: that of psychologizing the aesthetic on the one hand,[1121] and of aestheticizing the psychological on the other.[1122] Insofar as aesthetic illusions and immersivity have been relegated to somewhat antiquated, potentially conservative aesthetic forms, a study of aesthetic absorption might also appear as retrograde and oblivious to the subversive—rather than the lulling, hypnotic—power of literature. Indeed, "the history of Western art has seen the rise and fall of immersive ideals, and their displacement, in the twentieth century, by an esthetics of play and self-reflexivity that eventually produced the ideal of an active participation of the appreciator … in the production of the text."[1123] Immersion has been

[1120] See for instance: "losing oneself in a fictional world is the goal of the naive reader or one who reads as entertainment" David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991),155.

[1121] "Structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, new criticism, formalisms of all kinds have all taught to apprehend the text as a separate, an "autonomous verbal structure." Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 122. See also: "in fiction… even a well-known real locality is divested of any question as to its reality," and the here and now "no longer possesses any character of reality." Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature,* trans. M. Rese (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 24; 111. See also: "The meaning or the goal of this effort is to substitute the instance of discourse for the instance of reality (of the referent), which has been, and still is, a mythical 'alibi' dominating the idea of literature and instance of discourse." Roland Barthes, "To write, an Intransitive Verb?" in R. Macksey and E. Donato, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2007), 144. See also: "The discourse, or better, the language, speaks: nothing more" (Le discours, ou mieux encore, le langage parle, c'est tout)." Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970), 48; English transl., 41. "The function of narrative is not to 'represent,' it is to put together a scene which … does not belong to the mimetic order in any way. … What goes on in a narrative is, from the referential (real) point of view, strictly, *nothing.* What does 'happen' is language per se, the adventure of language, whose advent never ceases to be celebrated"" ("La fonction du récit n'est pas de 'représenter', elle est de constituer un spectacle qui … ne saurait être d'ordre mimétique… 'ce qui se passe' dans le récit n'est, du point de vue référentiel (réel), à la lettre : rien ; 'ce qui arrive', c'est le langage tout seul, l'aventure du langage, dont la venue ne cesse jamais d'être fêtée"). Barthes, "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits," *Communications* 8 (1966): 26-27, English trans., 271. For the poetic function of language, where focus is placed "on the message itself*"* ("l'accent [est] mis sur le message pour son propre compte"), and the autoreferentiality of literature, see Roman Jakobson, "Linguistique et poétique," in *Essais de linguistique générale* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963), 218, English trans., 356. In these accounts, the act of reading itself becomes a specifically literary activity which excludes all possibility of referential interpretations.

[1122] On other end of the spectrum, one can emphasize the ways in which fictional worlds and characters impact reality and our lives, how "fictional beings enter readers' lifeworlds." See Marco "Reading for the Mind; Aesthetic Illusion, Fictional Characters and the Role of Interpretation." In *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts.* Edited by Tomáš Koblížek (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 133. See also Felski, *Uses of Literature*. As will become apparent in this chapter, my analogy rejects the "elitist fallacy" according to which "as sophistication in reading grows, coarser tastes wither away" and "the critic's mind has nothing of cultural importance in common with those of the lower class that they study." Victor Nell, *Lost in a Book. The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure.* New Haven and (London: Yale University Press, 1988), 4. In this chapter I will also use the term "literature" in Ohmann's "nonhonorific" sense. As opposed to the honorific or normative sense, which comprises only works of high quality, the "non-honorific" sense includes "the sum total of all actual (and perhaps possible) literary works," including "bad" ones. Richard Ohmann, "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 4 (1971): 1.

[1123] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 2. Ryan sees a split in twentieth-century novels, with an intellectual avant-garde committed to new self-reflexive esthetics, and a "popular branch faithful to the immersive ideals and narrative techniques of the nineteenth century." Ryan, Ibid., 5. While it ultimately seeks to soften a hard distinction between

"either ignored or dismissed as the holdover of a now-discredited aesthetics of illusion that subordinates language to its referent, and ignores its power of configuration over the reality it is supposed to represent."[1124] Postmodern theory and aesthetics in particular—where immersion is often conceived as "passive subjection to the authority of the world-designer" and signs, rather than disappear, must be made visible "for their role in the construction of a reality"—suggest that "a mode of communication that strives toward transparency of the medium bereaves the user of his critical faculties."[1125]

As I will argue in this chapter, such dismissals of aesthetic immersion stem from a misconception about the nature and dynamics involved in the production and reception of aesthetic "illusions," which occur both in novel reading and hypnosis.[1126] As I will argue, immersive experiences are not incompatible with aesthetic distance, and should not be reduced to mere trickery or delusion on the part of the recipient. As Marie Laure Ryan argues about virtual reality, rather than encourage passivity, they engage the activity and the "participation of the whole of the individual in the artistic experience."[1127]

Our analogy between hypnosis and the act of reading therefore neither entails descriptions of unreflective "hypnotic" devouring of popular fiction, nor does it neglect the subtle inter- and intratextual dynamics which constitute the signification of literary texts. Rather, it seeks to draw out common characteristics between hypnotic and readerly subjectivity, by situating the recipient's

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"mimetic" and "self-reflective" fiction, the examination of explicitly meta-narrative (namely, postmodern) literature will help draw out the limits of our narrative-dependent analogy, and note the places in which it ceases to illuminate either field. For now, one can note that the eighteenth-century novel took an ambiguous stance towards immersion, cultivating immersive effects by simulating nonfictional narratives modes (such as memoirs, letters, autobiography, etc.) and yet "hold[ing] immersion in check through a playful, intrusive narrative style that directed attention back and forth from the story told to the storytelling act." Ibid., 4. Postmodernist texts on the other hand, in which meaning is "unstable, decentered, multiple, fluid, emergent," cultivate an even more explicit "playful attitude towards the medium" that privileges form over content, emphasizes spatial relations between words, puns, intertextual allusion, parody, self-referentiality, subverts plot and character, experiments with open structures, etc. Ibid., 5. For Ryan, hypertext literature (in which the reader determines the unfolding of the text by clicking on certain areas) can be regarded as the "fulfillment of the postmodern conception of meaning," because its interactivity "transposes the ideal of an endlessly self-renewable text from the level of the signified to the level of the signifier." Ibid. The question of whether such interactivity is compatible with out description of the hypnotic experience will be examined further down.

[1124] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 111.

[1125] Ibid., 120.

[1126] For Wolf, "aesthetic illusion" is a transmedial concept. Illusion-creating media include fiction, but also "visual arts, the theater, opera, comics, radio drama, film and computer-created virtual realities." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 326. Nonrepresentational art such as abstract painting and instrumental music therefore "cannot elicit aesthetic illusion." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion. Towards a Media-Conscious Theory," note 9, 348.

[1127] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 21.

experience on a spectrum that fluctuates between varying degrees of immersion and distance, and engages cognitive, imaginative, affective, and physiological responses in the subject. Our purpose in this chapter is to thus to illuminate, redefine, and reframe the shared aesthetic structures and aspects at work in both hypnosis and novel reading, that their treatment as absolutely separate fields would have left unnoticed.

Indeed, once they are examined in relation to each other, novelistic prose and the hypnotic experience offer numerous similarities that distinguish them from other media.[1128] The first of these is a common cognitive engagement involved in the translation of verbal discourse into an imagined reality. Indeed, hypnotic suggestions share a common indeterminacy with novelistic discourse, whereas "to a large extent, film does not ask for a guided mental *projection* but furnishes the audience with the essentials of the represented world." [1129] Indeed, unlike cinema, "insofar as it relays sensations through the imagination, literary language can offer data to all of the senses, thus increasing the vividness of the representation. It has been said that a book is 'cinema in your head'."[1130]

Readerly subjectivity, like hypnosis, involves a double dimension of spectatorship and participation: the reader is *acted on* by the world of the novel, and yet the world depends on the act of reading for its existence and actualization.[1131] Thus not only do novelistic prose and modern hypnotic discourse create a change in consciousness in their recipients, they make similar demands

[1128] In this respect, it is interesting to note that many of the examples of absorptive paintings chosen by Michael Fried in *Absorption and Theatricality* represent the act of reading. See for example, Chardin, *Un Philosophe occupé de sa lecture* (*Salon* of 1753), Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Un Pére de famille qui lit la Bible à ses enfants* (1755), Fragonard, *La Lecture* (1780), and Van Loo, *Lecture espagnole* (*Salon* of 1761).

[1129] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?,"52. Like hypnosis, "In fiction, the world in which we may be immersed is reconstructed from exclusively symbolic verbal signs and takes place exclusively in our minds. In contrast to this, when watching a film in a cinema, the reception situation, which is a performative one, does play a role: we are confronted with a dynamic show… and yet we are sitting in static seats, which are visibly distanced from the screen, and may feel our bodies curled in these seats and see ourselves surrounded by other spectators. These factors may distract from the impression of immersion… however our skill in 'reading' cinema film and aesthetic illusion are strong enough to bridge these distancing elements and draw us into the represented world. If this happens the space between our bodies and the screen is experienced as a continuum located on the same ontological level (the diegetic world), and the onscreen world is perceived as three-dimensional … while our awareness of all this is kept in latency mode" Wolf, Ibid., 49.

[1130] Daniel Fischlin and Andrew Taylor, "Cybertheater, Postmodernism, and Virtual Reality. An Interview with Toni Dove and Michael Mackenzie," *Science Fiction Studies* 21 (1994): 13.

[1131] Indeed, "understanding [the suggestion] requires that [the subject] acts it out to a certain degree." Milton Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities; The Induction of Clinical Hypnosis and Forms of Indirect Suggestion* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1976), 129.

on them in terms of creative and imaginative responses. In both cases, these demands are made *not directly* but through specific, literary or poetic, uses of language.[1132]

Like hypnosis, fiction is "a verbal artifact, an illusion created by a particular selection and combination of words" which can create worlds, as they blend in with the subject's internal mental activity.[1133] Both reader and hypnotic subject must interpret and convert the received discourse which leads to the creation of an *internally* generated scene rather than *the viewing* of an external spectacle—or *tableau,* as in theater or cinema. Hypnosis and novel reading thus turn us inward by paradoxically giving the impression of taking us *out* of ourselves and of taking *over* our consciousness.[1134]

As Peter Kivy describes it, despite the vividness of the impressions and sensations that can emerge from it, the experience of reading novels, like hypnosis, is first and foremost an internal, "mental" one:

> Neither its entire aesthetic and artistic payoff, nor any part thereof, lies in direct aural or visual acquaintance with an object or event present to the external senses. It lies, rather, in the reader's direct acquaintance with his or her conscious states. … It's all in the mind.[1135]

Kivy's description brings novel reading and hypnosis together in the idea of an aural, rather than visual internal experience. For him, the silent experience of reading novels is comparable to an internal performance occurring in the reader's mind.[1136] This *"*silent performance of the notated work" resembles what occurs when a musician internally "hears" the music while score reading, as if an "inner Ion" was reciting the story to the mind's ear.[1137] For Kivy, this means that "at least

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[1132] As it will become apparent further on, the term "poetic" is used extensively and includes the novelistic genre. It refers to the opposition between literary and non-literary texts, rather than novelistic and poetic ones (in the narrow sense).

[1133] Lilian Furst, *All is True. The Claims and Strategies of Realist Fiction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 145. When beholding a painting, "I do not think the thoughts of another as I would with a narrator." Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 170.

[1134] In Chapter 4, this process will be referred to as "unselfing."

[1135] Peter Kivy, "The Experience of Reading," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 106. See also cognitive psychologist Keith Oatley: creating a work of fiction is "an externalized simulation" which "can be internalized as we read it to augment our internal simulation." Keith Oatley, "Worlds of the possible. Abstraction, imagination, consciousness," *Pragmatics and Cognition* 21 (2013): 462.

[1136] "The novel, the paradigm instance of silently read literary fiction, is, *au fond*, a performing art, its silent readings being its performances. … As we know from Plato's *Republic* and *Ion*, as well as from numerous other ancient texts, the Homeric epics were performed works, given to audiences in public recitations, and were no more intended primarily to be read to oneself in private. … Poetry, in the ancient world, was a performing art … Even when read in private, by servant to master, or read aloud to oneself, they were experienced aurally … [as] a performance." Ibid., 108-109.

[1137] Kivy, "The Experience of Reading," 111; 116. Score reading is defined as "the internal realization of the sound of a work by means of simply reading the score." Don Michael Randel, (ed.), *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press, 2001), 766.

some conscious thought" consists in "hearing voices" in one's "head": "the experience of thought as a kind of inner colloquy seems to be a common human experience."[1138] This description of reading is significant for our purposes as it depathologizes—while simultaneously de-visualizing—the hallucinatory aspects of hypnosis and underlines their similarity with reading fiction.

In addition to this common activity on the part of the recipient, hypnosis and novel reading also enable specifically fictional modes of experiencing, which, as Dorrit Cohn has shown, are impossible in ordinary life: "the special lifelikeness of narrative fiction—as compared to dramatic and cinematic fictions—depends on what writers and readers know least in life: how another mind thinks, another body feels."[1139] The perspectival mobility which allows to fictionally "see" into the minds of others is shared by the novelistic and hypnotic imagination alike, as spatial and temporal laws fall away for both narratorial and readerly subjectivity.[1140] Indeed, both illusionist representations and hypnotic inductions provide recipients with new "deictic centers" or vantage points from which to experience represented worlds, allowing for aesthetic transportation and absorptive decentering and recentering, in which mobility and localization play central roles.[1141]

[1138] Kivy, Ibid., 111. See also: "Are not thought and speech the same, with this exception, that what is called thought is the unuttered conversation of the soul with herself?" Plato, *The Sophist,* in *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), 274. See also: "Not only do we talk to ourselves silently, but sometimes we do this in a particular tone of voice." Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston, TOR and London: Little; Brown, 1991), 195. For Kivy, Dennett's idea of "a tone of voice" fits the idea that we read *expressively* when we read out loud. Just as in hypnosis, conscious thought can still be present and "comment" on the internal experience, "the silent reader of serious novels has an Ion within, who tells the reader the story… and… comments on the serious propositional content of the story, if such content it has. In the latter capacity he (or she) is Plato's "unuttered conversation of the soul with herself." Kivy, 118.

[1139] Cohn, *Transparent Minds,* 5. "Depicting the inner life, the novelist is truly a fabricator. Even as he draws on psychological theory and on introspection, he creates what Ortega calls 'imaginary psychology… the psychology of possible human minds'." Ibid. See also Ryan: "To the extent that the narrator's sensations become the reader's, fiction offers a *mobility of point of view* at least as extensive as that of VR systems. The development of a type of narrator specific to fiction–the omniscient, impersonal narrator–has freed fictional discourse from the constraints of pragmatically possible human communication. The disembodied consciousness of the impersonal narrator can apprehend the fictional world *from any perspective,* adopt any member of the fictional world as focalizer, select any of observation, narrate in every temporal direction (retrospectively, simultaneously, even prospectively), and switch back and forth among these various narrative modes. Fiction, like VR, allows an experience of its reference world that would be impossible if this reference world were an objective, existing, material reality. … The effacement of the impersonal narrator and his freedom to relocate his consciousness anywhere, at any time and in whatever body or mind conveys the impression of unmediated presence: *minds become transparent*, and events seem to be telling themselves'." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 119-120, emphasis added.

[1140] As we saw in Chapter 2, this falling-away of spatial and temporal laws is a central component of the fascination that mesmerism exerted on literary authors of the nineteenth century. This shows the intimate link between hypnosis as a thematic object, and fictionality itself.

[1141] Zwaan, quoted in Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 39.

The Hypnotic Dimension of Realist Aesthetics

Although my argument also aims to encompass modernist and postmodern fiction, in this chapter I will mainly focus on realist aesthetics, which offer a particularly telling example of the dynamics of immersive de-centering and re-centering that I am looking to draw out in both novel reading and hypnosis.[1142] Indeed, as Ryan puts it (somewhat bluntly), like hypnosis, high realism "effaced the narrator and the narrative act, penetrated the mind of characters, transported the reader into a virtual body located on the scene of the action, and turned her into the direct witness of events, both mental and physical."[1143] I will thus consider the narrative and realist illusions as paradigmatic cases of aesthetic illusion or absorption and a fertile grounds to examine the immersive similarities it shares with hypnotic experiences.[1144] Indeed, as Werner Wolf observes, "during an illusionist reading, the actual mediation through the level of discourse is mostly disregarded, and we appear to 'witness' the storyworld as if it were located in a realm beyond the text and even, albeit paradoxically, independently of it, hence with a feeling of "immediacy."[1145]

However, in this chapter, the analogy between the hypnotic experience and novel reading will not limit itself to acknowledging this shared "immediacy" or "transparency." As I will argue, what brings realism and hypnosis together is that both are based on a fundamental paradox,

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[1142] Indeed, like hypnosis, realist novels "powerfully draw their readers into their worlds by maintaining a feeling of verisimilitude and experientially while minimizing aesthetic distance." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion. Towards a Media-Conscious Theory of Media-Elicited Immersion as a Transmedial Phenomenon." In *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 37. See also Todorov: "Le vraisemblable est le masque dont s'affublent les lois du texte, et que nous sommes censés de prendre pour une relation avec la réalité" ("Verisimilitude is the mask which is assumed by the laws of the text and which we are meant to take for a relation with reality*").* Todorov, *Poétique de la prose* (Paris : Le Seuil, 1971), 94, English translation, 83. See also James: "The air of reality … seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel… if it be there [its merits] owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success… form[s], to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist." Henry James, *The Art of Fiction* (Boston: Cupples, Upham and Company, 1885), 66. See also Nell: "[realism] renders the novel's power to absorb the reader superior to that of fable and myth, in which the protagonists have no personal background and move in a timeless and elemental terrain." Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 54.

[1143] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 4.

[1144] On the other end of the spectrum, anti-illusionist works (either in postmodern texts, or eighteenth-century works such as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maître)* deploy distancing devices to keep the reader outside of the possible world, devaluing the story level and foregrounding instead the level of discourse, emphasizing self-referentiality and self-reflexivity. As Werner Wolf notes, however, "Generally, anti-illusionism in fiction and elsewhere is a derivative phenomenon and always presupposes the existence of aesthetic illusion, be it in the same work or as a convention in the cultural context. Historically, anti-illusionism is almost as old as illusionism. In addition to the cultural context, the individual recipient and the work (and its performance) are as much factors in the breaking of illusion as in its formation. In its essence the breaking of illusion can be defined as the realization and "inflation" of the potential of distance that already exists latently within the aesthetic illusion itself at the pole opposite to immersion." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 342.

[1145] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 332.

consisting in the simultaneous acknowledgment *and* concealment of the conventionality, the artificiality, and the illusory dimension of this very "transparency."[1146] Indeed, realist novels and hypnotic discourse proceed in similar ways when it comes to soliciting temporary adherence and make-believe on the part of the recipient. In both cases, their aesthetic strategies involve a form of "trickery" that, beyond the diegetic level and narrative plot, also operates on the level of linguistic form: both attempt to conceal the strategies which guarantee their efficaciousness, and feign the adoption of a transparent, descriptive discourse in order to achieve their desired effects.

As I hope to show, in its efforts to downplay its textual and fictional nature and give the impression of continuity between reality and fictive worlds, the realist novel operates like the hypnotist, who must gradually ease the subject into the hypnotic experience and conceal most of the immersive techniques and suggestions that are used to do so, which help circumvent the subject's resistance and illusion-breaking thought processes.[1147] The realist novel thus operates "strategically" in its efforts to "conceal its own devices, including its frame" and "its endeavor to pass itself as 'truth."[1148] As Lilian Furst notes, "the task it sets itself of seducing readers to enter its portals without disclosing their lineaments is thus an extraordinarily tricky one," and one shared with the hypnotic operator.[1149]

In order to draw out the common modes of aesthetic awareness and sensibility involved in hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity, I will propose a threefold argument.

First, I will examine the ontological status of hypnotic and literary discourse. Using speech act theory and reader-oriented literary criticism, I will argue that the utterances found in narrative literature and hypnosis are neither mere descriptive statements, nor ordinary communicative utterances. Both hypnotic nor literary discourse "violate" the usual conditions of ordinary speech situations, and neither are apprehended in terms of ascribing truth value or falsity, as we would of everyday assertions. As I will show, in both hypnosis and narrative literature, the subject engages

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[1146] "Since immersion depends on vividness, its factors are closely related to the devices that lead to realism in representation." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 112. Such devices involve transparency of discourse, as seen in modern hypnosis and in "invisible" or omniscient nineteenth-century realist narrators. See Mukařovský: realism "completed the mechanism of the novel" and aims to create the illusion of immediate viewing of reality, by "leaving the narrator at most the function of the lens in a camera or an accurately recording scientific instrument." Mukařovský, *Studie II,* (Brno: Host, 2001), 403. Whereas modernism reveals and emphasizes the *manner* in which the story is told (including the difficulties involved in the process), realism deliberately obscures it.

[1147] In this sense, the realist novel "effaces" the narrative act (as Ryan put it higher up), by concealing it, but it does not remove it altogether.

[1148] Furst, *All is True.* 50.

[1149] Ibid., 50.

in subtle yet powerful games of "make-believe," which can create strong affective, cognitive, and even physiological effects, without this having to mobilize any *beliefs* about the actual world. In other words, both fiction and hypnosis are able to create very "real" effects by using inherently illusory—"unreal"—means.[1150]

Secondly, I will suggest that literary texts bear striking similarities with the hypnotic experience, in their ability to create strong absorptive and immersive experience. Both hypnosis and narrative literature can be considered as two instances of the "aesthetic illusion," in which the recipient temporarily and willfully suspends their ordinary relation to the world and lets themselves be absorbed into the work of art, and/or the fictional universe. In order to illustrate this point, I will offer a close reading of Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* as an example of readerly absorption. I will then turn to literary theory, in order to track various "hypnotic" metaphors that illustrate how literary text and hypnosis work in similar ways, in their ability to create strong illusory experiences, which depend on the subject's activity and willingness to be temporarily "tricked," on the *as if* mode.

In the third part of my argument, I will argue that due to its strong similarities with literary discourse, hypnosis can, in turn, be considered as an aesthetic, "poetic" use of language. Taking a closer look at the workings of hypnotic suggestions, I underline their similarities with literary discourse. As I will show, the felicity of hypnotic utterances depends in great part on the operator's attention to the formal, stylistic aspects of the operator's discourse. However, hypnotic authority or efficacy should be shifted back, not to the operator-author or to the "power" of poetic language itself, but most importantly, to the subject who actualizes and performs the hypnotic "text" which

[1150] In this sense, by examining the "truth value" of literary utterances in general, this chapter also aims to reexamine or reassess the "naivety" of the realist enterprise in particular, suggesting that the claims to truthfulness of realist fiction and the problem of referentiality no not exhaust the question of its relation to "reality." Furthermore, it is important to note, that just as the characteristics of trance vary historically and geographically, as Gombrich and Wolf argue, "verisimilitude—and with it aesthetic illusionism—are to a considerable extent historically and culturally variable" and the aesthetic illusion—which also depends on cultural conventions and a repertoire of contents and expectations—abolishes the "myth" of an "innocent eye." Wolf, Ibid., 333; Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 14; 298. As a result, the same work or similar techniques of representation can change in their illusionist *valeur* according to temporal and spatial parameters." Wolf, Ibid, 333. Dorrit Cohn has also noted that our standards for what counts as a "realistic" portrayal or mimetic representation of consciousness evolve in history: "The first generation of *Ulysses* readers … could only have experienced Bloom's and Stephen's mental productions as radical departures from realistic representation," whereas "today's reader is more likely to take Joyce's conception of verbal thought for granted … and to accept the monologues of *Ulysses* as supremely convincing achievements of formal mimeticism." Cohn, *Transparent Minds,* 93.

is presented to her. As in literature, the recipient's engagement, rather than the intention of the "speaker," constitutes the meaning and the "literariness" or "hypnotic quality" of language.

On the aesthetic level, hypnotic and novelistic immersion thus illuminate one another, *via* their shared illusionist nature, as well as their conventional and formal, "artificial" nature. Both create an experience of immersion in which the subject remains highly active, unlike what is often portrayed in depictions on hypnotic or aesthetic absorption as a process of automatic, passive, or blind receptivity. [1151] On the contrary, the creative process of make-believe at work in hypnosis and novel reading is one of temporary adherence and active conversion of words into (fictional) worlds.

3.1. How to Do Strange Things With Words. The Ontological Status of Hypnotic and Literary Utterances

3.1.1. The Power of Words: Literature and Hypnosis as Speech Acts

Literary texts, like hypnosis, are special kinds of uses of language. Although they sometimes take on the appearance of descriptive statements, they are not ordinary descriptions of the state of the world, and we do not attribute truth value or falsity to them in the same way that we do of everyday assertions. Secondly, they seem to set up a communicative situation of sorts, between a writer, text or speaker, and a recipient. In *The Nature of Fiction,* for example, Gregory Currie proposes that "we think of reading as a limiting case of conversation: a conversation in which one party does all the talking."[1152] In *All is True,* Lilian Furst also describes reading novels as "an implied communicative situation in which readers respond to signals emitted by the narrator's text."[1153] However, upon closer inspection, they cannot be considered as ordinary forms of communicative acts, as both violate the usual conditions of every day communication or speech.

[1151] While assuming that the whole enterprise of the realist illusion rests on a claim to transparency which is, as in hypnosis, a *mask* for its conventionality and for the limited, subjective nature of all perspectives, our response will also have to steer between "the Scylla of the referential fallacy that the realist novel is simply a faithful mirror to everyday life and the Charybdis of the linguistic fallacy that it is simply a web of words." Furst, *All is True,* 22.
[1152] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 29. Walton disagrees strongly with claims like those of Currie according to which fictional utterances require fictive intent. Indeed, he rejects the conception of fiction as vehicle for illocutionary acts, and argues that there can be fiction without intention or speaker. With the famous case of "'cracks in a rock spelling out 'once upon a time there were three bears'… the realization that the inscription was not made or used by anyone need not prevent us from reading and enjoying the story… it may be *entrancing.*" Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 87, emphasis added.
[1153] Furst, Ibid., 66.

In what follows, I will use speech act theory and ordinary language criticism to examine in which sense the relations between hypnosis and literature could be conceived as two forms of "communicative" acts, and in which sense this "communication" differs from ordinary speech situations.[1154] Rather than consider the reading and hypnotic process as the imposition of a given discourse onto a passive recipient, I will also draw on literary theory which acknowledges the reader's active participation in the constitution of the meaning of the text, and brings a corrective to "a hermeneutic tradition that has tended to view all literary texts as locutions without interlocutors."[1155] Indeed, verbal texts—both hypnotic and literary—serve "only as a guiding script for a 'projection' that exclusively takes place in our minds," and " demands a considerable reception activity."[1156]

The conception of literature as communication is unpopular in formalist criticism, where poetic discourse defines itself in opposition to communicative, ordinary language.[1157] Indeed, in formalism, language "has either a communicative function, that is, it is directed toward the signified, or a poetic function, that is, it is directed toward the sign itself."[1158] Nevertheless, despite this distinction, can literature and hypnosis not be considered as poetic-communicative acts involving a "speaker" (an author, implied author, narrator/hypnotic operator)[1159] emitting a "discourse" (a literary text/hypnotic suggestion) directed towards a "recipient" (a reader—whether informed, implied, ideal, etc./hypnotic subject), who must respond appropriately for the utterances to be felicitous? From there, what is the ontological status of such utterances: is their force an essential component of the utterances themselves or is it produced by their reception and their context—rather than their content or the underlying intention of their "speaker"?

[1154] Cognitive science inspired criticism questions the shunning of the communicative aspect of literary texts and the "taboo" in speaking of "the text as an act of communication among real people in the world." Susan S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Points of View of Prose Fiction.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 46; Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction,* 81.

[1155] Clayton Koelb, *Inventions of Reading: Rhetoric and the Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 21.

[1156] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 47.

[1157] More specifically, "the violation of the norm of the [communicative] standard, its systematic violation, is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language." Mukařovský, 1932, 20, quoted in Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory,* 199.

[1158] Cercle Linguistique de Prague, 1929, 14 trans. Marie-Louise Pratt, in *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

[1159] See for example: "The narrator is a fictional figure that performs the speech acts of the writer's text." Richard Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 179; or Currie: When reading, we pretend that the "speaker (the fictional author) expresses himself "by using language in the way a real person does: sometimes literally and sometimes not," sometimes ironically, metaphorically, etc. Currie, *The Nature of Fiction,* 116.

3.1.1.1. Literature and Hypnosis as Speech Acts?

Literary and hypnotic utterances share a certain number of common features, which can be traced back to the mysterious origins and "powers" of language, that the hypnotist was traditionally believed to channel.[1160] The curative powers of language are precisely what is at stake in the birth of psychoanalysis, as Freud writes in "The Question of Lay Analysis," linking words to their "magical" origins:

> Words, words, words, as Prince Hamlet says... So it is a kind of magic… you talk and blow away his ailments…Quite true. It would be magic if it worked rather quicker… And incidentally do not let us despise the *word*… originally the word was magic—a magical act; and it has retained much of its ancient power.[1161]

As we saw in Chapter 1, analysis defines itself by banishing all "fascinating" properties, all enchantment from *logos*, by extracting the "'rational kernel' from magical speech and removing it from its 'mystical shell' (notably hypnotic)."[1162] Despite this gesture of separation, critics like Borch-Jacobsen argue that in fact, "in its curative effectiveness," psychoanalysis "never does anything but return to the ancient 'magic power of words."[1163] Regardless of whether it does or not, the Freudian gesture of banishment is in any case an acknowledgment of the magic of words.

Furthermore, as Rita Felski notes, since antiquity, "art in general—especially popular art—has faced accusations of "bewitching and disorienting its audience, calling up an association … with magic."[1164] As a special kind of use of language, literature has even more so been associated with extraordinary, spellbinding powers.[1165] Indeed, literary texts have a haunting ability to conjure

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[1160] See Freud's comments on the Bernheimian method: "A layman will no doubt find it hard to understand how pathological disorders of the body and mind can be eliminated by 'mere' words. He will feel that he is being asked to believe in magic. And he will not be so very wrong, for the words which we use in our everyday speech are nothing other than watered-down magic." Sigmund Freud, "Psychical (or Mental) Treatment," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 7, 1890, 283.

[1161] Freud, "The Question Lay Analysis," (1926), *SE,* 20:187-188.

[1162] Ibid., 32. Maurice Blanchot describes the Freudian gesture as a profession of faith in the 'God Logos': "What confidence in the liberating power of language. What virtue accorded to the simplest relation: a man who speaks to another man who listens. And here, not only spirits are cured, but bodies. This is admirable, this now goes beyond reason. To avoid any grossly magic interpretation of this marvelous phenomenon, Freud had to make a stubborn effort at elucidation, all the more necessary since his method had an impure origin, having started very close to magnetism, hypnosis and suggestion" (Blanchot, 1969, 343, translation D. Brick).

[1163] Borch-Jacobsen, "Talking Cure," *Oxford Literary Review* 12, No. 1/2 (1990): 31.

[1164] Felski, 52.

[1165] As we saw in Chapter 1, this suspicion towards poetic rapture can be traced back to Plato's *Ion,* where possession and inspiration are also described as conditions for poetic creation: it is only when the poet is "out of his senses" and "the mind is no longer in him" that he can compose his "beautiful poems." Plato, *Ion,* 533d. Nidesh Lawtoo has recently shown how in his later writings (namely *The Case of Wagner* describing Wagner's "hypnotic" powers), Nietzsche uses and applies Plato's criticism of mimesis in the psychological realm. By pointing out the contagious

up absent realities with mere words. As Michel Butor puts it: "from where does this singular power, to make absent things present, this haunting, come?... and yet, these objects are merely made of words."[1166]

Not only do stories create presence out of absence, they also deeply impact their audience: "Odysseus' tale was finished, and such was the spell he had cast on the whole company that not a sound was herd throughout the shadowy hall."[1167] In the modern era, the novel is the genre which, as Felski observes, has been most reproached for bewitching its audience:

> For much of the *longue durée* of modernity, the novel is the genre most frequently accused of casting a spell on its readers; like a dangerous drug, it lures them away from their everyday lives in search of heightened sensations and undiluted pleasures. Disoriented by the power of words, readers are no longer able to distinguish between reality and imagination; deprived of their reason, they act like mad persons and fools.[1168]

From this perspective, the analogy between hypnosis and reading seems to emphasize the similarities between author-narrator and hypnotist (rather than reader and subject), especially in the case of texts with authoritative narrators: *"*implicit in stories about the spell of storytelling is the narrator's own sense of power, the awareness that a recalcitrant audience may be bent to one's will and swayed by one's moods. It is a power relationship that strongly parallels the induction of hypnotic trance."[1169]

Indeed, some literary texts even contain instructions, or suggestions on how they are to be read, as did the numerous explanatory prefaces to the nineteenth-century realist novels of Zola or Balzac for example. As Todorov notes, before the emergence of literary criticism of the novel, the

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dangers of affective mimesis, he gives a platonic description of the pathological impact or affective contamination that the actor imposes upon the spectator. Like Plato, he points out the dangerous influence of effect on the crowd and on young people; its irrational and blinding properties. In the crowd, it spreads like a disease, through the instinctual and physiological mirroring-process of affective mimesis. In the case of Wagner, however, he emphasizes the dangers of the "hypnotic" powers of theatre. For him, the "power of hypnosis, or of suggestion" is what explains Wagner's power to "persuade" the masses. Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego*, 70. For Nietzsche, this is the pathology of the modern subject: he is excessively suggestible, dispossessed of his choices and values. His ego is a mere reflection –a phantom–that mirrors thoughts, opinions and moralities passively received from the outside.

[1166] (**"**D'où vient ce singulier pouvoir, rendre présents les objets absents, cette 'hantise'? ... et pourtant ces objets sont à leur tour des mots." Michel Butor, "Le Roman et la poésie," in *Répertoire* I (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1960), 8. Like hypnotic hallucinations, fiction produces "un stable fantasme," a phantasy that seems as "stable" as reality. Ibid.

[1167] Homer, *Odyssey,* XIII. This spellbinding quality is found in a wide array of narrative traditions. In the field of anthropology for example, Marivate writes that among the Tsonga of North Natal in South Africa, a taboo was enforced against storytelling before sunset, as otherwise, the indulgence in the leisurely pastime would take up too much of the time of the working day. Nowadays, the Tsonga's storytelling is broadcast on the radio in the Transvaal province of South Africa, where orators "keep their audience hypnotized with their performance and dramatic artistry." See C. T. D. Marivate, "Tsonga Folktales: Form, Content, and Delivery." M.A. Thesis, University of South Africa, 1973, 26, quoted in Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 30.

[1168] Felski, 52-53.

[1169] Nell, 48.

realist narrative "contained within itself directions for its own consumption."[1170] In fact, as Furst observes, until the middle of the twentieth century, not only readers, but also "the majority of critics were guided in their approach to realist fiction by the reading instructions enunciated by the novelists themselves … implicitly subscribing to referentiality as the 'appropriate mode of reading.'"[1171]

From here, if receiving or reading a realist novel "adequately" is comparable to accepting a suggestion, then conversely, writing it must imply a process akin to hypnotic influence. As Furst argues, "to read a realist narrative is to *submit* to an act of *persuasion,* the aim of which is to convert readers to the belief that 'all is true'" and writing realist fiction is "as much an exercise in persuasion as advertising or political rhetoric."[1172]

Like the hypnotic subject who must follow the rhythm of the operator's words, the reader is submitted to the pace of the literary text. As Wolf notes, this "subjection" is in part what brings novel reading closer to the experience of the everyday. Indeed, with novelistic texts, the reception contract entails our willingness to "follow the flow of words" without interruption, to encounter textual elements "at the pace of the text and not our own" and to be "somehow subject to it in a way analogous to our being subject to the vicissitudes of life."[1173] Balzac's descriptions offer a

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[1170] Todorov, "Reading as Construction," in *The Reader in the Text,* ed. S. Suleiman and I. Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 77.

[1171] Furst, *All is True,* 13. For Furst, this explains in great part why it took so long for criticism to consider realism as yet another set of conventions: "if the realist novel was for over a century the victim of simplistic readings, it was because critics took it as its face value, accepting the self-image that the realists actively propagated of themselves as artless chroniclers of their day." Ibid.

[1172] Furst, *All is True,* 26; 56, emphasis added. The lexical field of hypnosis permeates Lilian Furst's descriptions of the realist contract: "The words printed on the page are designed to *act on readers in certain ways*: to encourage belief in the illusion by fostering a shared angle of vision with the narrator and, at times, with the protagonists." Ibid., ix, emphasis added. "The frame that surrounds a fiction is fashioned *cooperatively* by the joint venture in pretense on the part of the narrator and readers… The narrator, through *suggestive strategies*, acts as the instigator of the illusion… In so doing, he functions as one half of the frame. Its complementary other half is provided by the *assenting audience* through its *willingness to enter into that pretense in response* to the invitation extended by the narrator. In its *readiness to comply* with the narrator the audience is engaging in the game of make-believe that animates realist fiction." Ibid., 49. These descriptions of the dynamics of suggestion and compliance could all apply to the hypnotic session, particularly to the initial framework which establishes the hypnotic contract and rapport. While the latter is often explicit and customary in modern hypnosis, it is often left implicit in the traditional authoritative model, in the same manner that realist fiction avoids meta-narrative commentary that would foreground its textual nature.

[1173] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 44-45. The novel distills information in a temporal process of gradual unfolding. It creates a teleological structure that the reader can only discover, not control. As Iser has shown, this temporal flow is the movement of reading itself, in which each new moment "stands out against the old," the past remaining in the mind "as a background to the present" and becoming "itself being modified by the present" as each segment also has a retroactive effect. This two-way influence is "a basic structure in the time flow" of the reading process and "brings about the reader's position within the text." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 114. See also: "language can afford only a gradual approach to the textual world … as a temporal medium it discloses its geography detail by detail, bringing it slowly into the reader's mind." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 122.

good example of this process, as they do not function in a static, synoptic, or panoramic manner—as in a photograph. Rather, they are deambulatory, following the movement of the characters and the narrative thread with a moving point of view, tracing a spatial and temporal *parcours,* a *promenade*. In *Le Père Goriot* for instance, the narrative perspective "trace[s] a precise itinerary through the fictional world" and "inspects the building in a systematic manner … as would a real estate agent or a prospective tenant."[1174] In order to penetrate the fictional world, the reader must follow this movement and its direction as it unfolds, just as the hypnotic "universe" seems to emerge from the stream of utterances pronounced by the operator.

Despite this apparent "subjection," however, it is the performance aspect of literary utterances, the response they elicit in the recipient, that brings them close to hypnotic discourse and enables one to consider literature as an act of communication. As Iser has shown, "literary texts initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meaning themselves" and in this sense, "produce something that they themselves are not."[1175] As I suggest in this chapter, hypnotic suggestions function much in the same manner. Once one takes into consideration not only the effect of the text on the reader-subject, but also the reader's active role in the constitution of the text and its meaning, the communicative—and as will argue, the cooperative or contractual—aspect of both literature and hypnosis can appear more clearly. Currie's claim about the unidirectional nature of literary communication, cited in the introduction to this section, can in this sense be nuanced: readers' responses directly participate in the constitution of literary utterances.[1176] These preliminary remarks shed new light on the common adage according to which all hypnosis is in fact, self-hypnosis.

[1174] Ryan, Ibid., 125.
[1175] Iser, *The Act of Reading* 27.
[1176] The aesthetic illusion caused by the novel can be conceived as "a mental reaction to the act of perception of various forms of texts … designed for the purpose of specific communication between the producer and the receiver." Bohumil Fořt, "Aesthetic Illusion Between the Prague School and Fictional Worlds Theory," in *The Aesthetic Illusion* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 274. For Fořt, fictional worlds are "mental entities encoded by the poetic (writing) activity of their authors and decoded by the reception (reading) of the recipient," and are "based on the author-recipient contract that allows them to produce and perceive/receive fictional worlds as fictional worlds." Ibid., 284. For the recipient, to receive is to have produced: the communication is, just as in hypnosis, far from being unidirectional.

3.1.1.2. Hypnotic Speech Acts?

This being said, in which sense can hypnotic suggestions be considered as specific—that is, performative, or illocutionary—speech acts?[1177]

In "Convention and Meaning: Derrida and Austin," Jonathan Culler discusses the "collapse" of J. L. Austin's distinction between constative and performative utterances.[1178] As Culler notes, upon closer inspection, the constative is a special case of performative: the utterance "the cat is on the mat" is the same as "I hereby declare the cat is on the mat" (an invisible performative lurks behind the constative). Indeed, it would be possible to lengthen an utterance to include the "underlying strings" which specify its illocutionary force, to utter the underlying, "deletable" clause, which we do without in ordinary speech.[1179] Significantly, the same argument can be applied to hypnotic suggestions, which can also be described as constatives behind which lurk performative utterances. For instance, in the classical (direct) suggestion, "You feel your hand becoming heavier," the performative "I hereby declare and ask/command that you feel your hand becoming heavier" can be identified behind the apparent description. In the (direct) suggestion "In a few seconds you will *go into trance,"* the imperative (in italics) is disguised under the predictive statement. In the (indirect) suggestion: *"*When they close their eyes, most people *go into trance,*" the hidden imperative (the direct suggestion, also in italics) is disguised behind the third person evocative, i.e. descriptive, statement. In each case, commands/performatives/illocutionary acts are cloaked as descriptions/constatives—or in Searle's terms, directives as representatives.[1180]

[1177] In Searle's 1973 classification of the five basic categories of illocutionary acts, one can underline those that correspond to the usual illocutionary force of hypnotic suggestions (here in bold):

1. Representatives: presenting a state of affairs, past, present, future or hypothetical, [e.g. **claiming,** h**ypothesizing, describing, predicting**, **telling,** insisting, suggesting, swearing that something is the case]
2. Directives: designed to get the addressee to do something [**requesting, commanding**, pleading, **inviting,** daring]
3. Commissives: acts that summit the speaker to doing something [promising, threatening, vowing (*a hypnotic suggestion, in that it is a "gamble" of sorts, can also be considered as an implicit commissive.* E.g.: *["I promise that] your hand will become lighter")]*
4. Expressives: that express only the speaker's psychological state [**congratulating**, thanking, deploring, condoling, **welcoming**]
5. Declarations: that bring about the state of affairs they refer to [blessing, firing, baptizing, bidding, passing sentence on].

[1178] Culler, 28.

[1179] Ibid., 17.

[1180] Representatives include "statements, assertions, descriptions, characterizations, identifications, explanations, and numerous others." John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," *New Literary History* 6 (1975): 325, note 5.

However, this is only the case if the hypnotic suggestion "takes hold"—if it is accepted and enacted by the subject—which is to say, if the utterance is felicitous.

Furthermore, while constative utterances are true or false, performatives are neither true nor false—they merely perform the action to which they refer. Direct hypnotic suggestions, however, go one step further. Not only are they illocutionary and often perlocutionary acts,[1181] if they are felicitous, they turn out to be *retrospectively* true. In this sense, they can count as true constatives *a posteriori.* At the moment of the utterance however, the operator takes a risk by anticipating that once—and if—they are enacted, they "will have been true."[1182] Here perhaps lies hypnotic performativity on the side of the operator:[1183] the truth value of his utterance depends on its *becoming true* for the subject, even if momentarily. Hypnotic felicity depends on the cooperation and authentic performance of the subject. If it occurs, it is performed simultaneously with the operator's utterance, whenever the subject experiences the hypnotist's words as "his own thoughts," in a direct manner, or when the suggested phenomenon unfolds in a seemingly involuntary manner. The "magic" of hypnotic discourse is therefore that with which one's words become another's *reality,* in a seemingly unmediated way.

[1181] See Austin: "Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either only obliquely, or even not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act." Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 102. Austin specifies that almost any utterance can have perlocutionary force: "*Any*, or almost any, perlocutionary act is liable to be brought off, in sufficiently special circumstances, by the issuing, with or without calculation, of any utterance whatsoever, and in particular by a straightforward constative utterance (if there is such an animal). You may, for example, deter me from doing something by informing me, perhaps guilelessly yet opportunely, what the consequences of doing it would in fact be." Ibid., 111. Hypnotic discourse also creates reactions in the listener which are caused not *in* the act of saying but *by* the utterance–convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising, misleading, and so on.

[1182] "We must be ready to draw the necessary distinction… between the act of attempting … to perform a certain illocutionary act, and the act of successfully achieving or consummating or bringing off such an act." Austin, 106-107. Culler also underlines this "risky" dimension: "the possibility of failure is internal to the performative"; "Something cannot be a performative unless it can go wrong." Jonathan Culler, "Convention and Meaning: Derrida and Austin." *New Literary History*13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1981): 18.

[1183] Deconstructive readings of Austin emphasize the indissociability of performative and performance–iterability, citation, framing, nonserious parasitic reiterations, etc.–which Austin seems to refuse by excluding the "nonserious," literary speech acts from his examination. From a Derridean perspective according to which imitation is the condition of possibility of the authentic-original, Austin's serious performatives are only "a special case of performances." Culler, "Convention and Meaning," 22. Furthermore, for Derrida "performatives depend upon the iterability that is most explicitly manifested in performances." Derrida, in Culler, 22. Derrida thus doubts whether a performative could work if it did not depend on an iterable convention, "if it were not identifiable in some way as citation." Derrida, Ibid., 21.

However, the mere act of uttering a hypnotic suggestion is in itself not sufficient for it to be felicitous.[1184] This being said, a precise account of the appropriateness or felicity conditions for hypnotic speech acts is difficult to produce, given the special nature of the hypnotic speech situation.[1185] Indeed, in hypnosis, it is tacitly implied that the subject's conscious understanding and awareness are neither a hindrance nor a necessity for the felicity of hypnotic utterances, which is taken to address the subject's "unconscious mind."[1186] The hypnotic situation is particular in

[1184] See Austin: "Besides the uttering of the words of the so-called performative, a good many other things have as a general rule to be right and to go right if we are to be said to have happily brought off our action." Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 14).

[1185] Culler notes—following Derrida—that it is impossible to exhaust the contextual possibilities to specify the limits of illocutionary force: "Meaning is context bound, but context is boundless. Culler, "Convention and Meaning," 24. Nevertheless, hypnotic utterances often violate the appropriateness conditions of ordinary speech acts. The four rules of an assertion as stated by Searle are the following:
(I) The essential rule: the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the expressed proposition.
(2) The preparatory rules: the speaker must be in a position to provide evidence or reasons for the truth of the expressed proposition
(3) The expressed proposition must not be obviously true to both the speaker and the hearer in the context of utterance
(4) The sincerity rule: the speaker commits himself to a belief in the truth of the expressed proposition. Because the "truth" of a hypnotic assertion will be revealed after the fact, the speaker cannot commit to it *a priori*—only retrospectively. The way in which he is committed to the belief in the truth of his assertion is ambiguous–it is done on the *as if* mode, yet with a belief in the fact that *this mode has the power* to produce a real phenomenon. The operator thus violates the sincerity rule while adhering to it on another level: he remains strongly committed to the *truth-to-b*e of his utterance, without which it will most likely fail. This level can be distinguished from the "fictional" anecdotes told by the hypnotist, which resemble the utterances of the authors of novels who have "no commitment" to the truth of their "assertions" according to Searle. Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," 321. For representatives, whose sincerity conditions include the different "degree of belief or commitment towards the truth of what is being represented," the operator carries out a gamble of sorts: he describes while feigning truth or belief (and to a certain degree, must believe in order to be congruent), and if the subject responds appropriately, then the utterance is successful. For directives, with which a preparatory condition is that "the addressee must be able to carry out what is being asked of him," the operator cannot tell in advance whether the subject is capable or not, and must once more gamble precisely on this fact. However, hypnosis (especially in the authoritative model) relies strongly on the fact that "many declarations have appropriateness conditions requiring that the speaker be endowed with institutional authority to perform the act in question" : hypnotic setting, reputation, framing, therapeutic authority, cultural norms defining trance, etc., all act as suggestions which are operative before the act of hypnosis begins, that is, before any utterance is even made. In modern hypnosis, the authority is in great part acknowledged to lie on the side of the subject, and depend on his or her belief system. It is thus easier to examine the appropriateness conditions of hypnotic utterances not on the level of discrete individual sentences, but rather on the level of discourse at a whole ("hypnotic language"). In this sense, a story told by Milton Erickson in a therapeutic setting, one told in casual conversation, and another told by an individual testifying in court will all differ in terms of their contrasting effects and appropriateness conditions, not their content. The main contextual prerequisites for the felicity of hypnotic utterances might consist in the subject's willingness to cooperate, and a sense that the operator both 1) knows what he is doing and 2) has ethical norms that ensure the subject's trust and safety (necessary for 1).

[1186] For example, conversational and covert hypnosis work with the assumption that the subject's knowledge that hypnosis is being performed is not required. This contradicts Searle's notion that illocutionary acts cannot be felicitous if the addressee "does not speak the language in question, is out of earshot, or is otherwise incapable of understanding the utterance." Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse,* 84. Subjects in a deep somnambulistic trance don't seem to be (or report to having been) focusing their awareness on the words, and yet they enact the suggestions nonetheless. The operator is thus in a sense addressing another through the subject. Because the success of the utterances will be measured in terms of the subject's reaction and yet, because these actions can be purely internal and thus escape exterior observation, it is empirically difficult to measure levels of success other than with suggestibility

that it seems to involve two recipients, a subject who is both asleep and awake, *there and not there,* and therefore, is divested of the capacity for understanding which is ordinarily implied in rational, conscious awareness and self-mastery. These conditions nullify the subject's authority and status as listener in an everyday communicative situation.[1187] In a sense, the main addressee of hypnotic discourse (the unconscious of the subject) remains inaccessible, and yet must exist for the suggestion to be "heard" and enacted. Conversely, if a hypnotized individual become the subject of enunciation and speaks under hypnosis, the question of *who is speaking* becomes equally problematic. Indeed, as Mikkel Borch-Jacobson describes it, under hypnosis:

> I speak (myself) transfixed, traversed by the other that I am. … Mimetic speech is too truly a speech act and perhaps even *the* speech act par excellence. But it is the speech act of the "other me"—of that other (who perhaps is really nothing other than language) who I *am* in saying it.[1188]

In this situation, the subject who pronounces the utterance is absent to itself, and is thus not even a subject. Rather, it is a split subjectivity where "I" is possessed by another, who speaks through it, like an actor. In this context, self-narration is impossible, since strictly speaking, as Vincent Descombes puts it, "the subject does not know what he is saying."[1189]

Where, then (if not in the mere act of uttering) does the "literary" or "hypnotic" quality of an utterance lie?

As Austin has shown, in a linguistic exchange, "the occasion of an utterance matters seriously," and "the words used are to some extent to be 'explained' by the 'context' in which they are designed to be or have actually been."[1190]

Given that the felicity conditions of hypnosis depend in great part on the setting, the belief system of the subject, and the "authority" which they invest in the operator, it is therefore neither content nor intention that determines whether an utterance counts as "hypnotic" or not, but

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scales or retrospective (subjective) feedback from the subject. Post-hypnotic amnesia further complicated the process. Yet, therapeutic change can occur despite the memory of the session having disappeared. The notion of "understanding" operating in speech act theory is thus difficult to transpose to the hypnotic speech-situation, as conscious understanding is neither sufficient nor necessary for the felicity of the hypnotic utterance.

[1187] In fact, Culler mentions hypnosis in passing as a contributing factor to the *failure* of performative acts (a situation in which the conditions fit but the utterance cannot have the illocutionary force it should) in the example of the marriage ceremony: "Suppose that the requirements for a marriage ceremony we met but that one of the parties were under hypnosis, or again that ceremony were impeccable in all respects but had been called a rehearsal." Culler, "Convention and Meaning," 23. Here, hypnotic trance cancels out the value of assent, and nullifies it.

[1188] Borch-Jacobsen, "Talking Cure," 51-52.

[1189] ("Le sujet ne sait pas ce qu'il dit.") Vincent Descombes, *L'Inconscient malgré lui* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 85. As I will argue in Chapter 4, this is an extremely reductive portrayal of hypnotic speech, that overshadows the narrative potential of the hypnotic experience and the reflexive awareness of the hypnotic subject.

[1190] Austin, *How to Do Things,* 101.

context.[1191] In other words, the illocutionary force of hypnotic speech acts depends heavily on the characteristics of the speech situation, and "what [the speaker] had in mind at the moment of utterance does not determine what speech act his utterance performed."[1192] With hypnotic utterances, the operator's belief in the force and meaning of his discourse is practically irrelevant as long as he acts *as if* he believed in them, that is, in a congruent manner. Like the Placebo effect, the efficacy of hypnotic suggestions can occur independently of the operator's internal state.[1193]

Similarly, speech act theorists have argued that the condition for literariness does not lie in the utterance itself, in the text's content or form. Debates involve determining whether it lies in the intention of the speaker/author, or in the receptive activity of the reader, and thus in the context of the reception situation. In strong opposition to the distinctions between ordinary and poetic discourse theorized by the Russian formalists and the Prague school, [1194] Searle argues that literariness is not an internal property of the text itself:

> There is no trait or set of traits which all works of literature have in common and which could constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a work of literature. Literature, to use Wittgenstein's terminology, is a family-resemblance notion. … 'Literature' is the name of a set of attitudes we take toward a stretch of discourse, not a name of an internal property of the stretch of discourse.[1195]

[1191] As Derrida has noted, the intentions of the speaker are neither transparent nor complete, and the unconscious manifests itself as a problem for the subject of enunciation. Unconscious desire should indeed also be taken into account in the possibilities of further specifications of context. For example, promising "something the listener wants but unconsciously dreads" might turn the promise into a threat. See Derrida, *Limited Inc*, a b c…, 215.

[1192] Culler, 24. If after the marriage the minister says he was joking all along, the illocutionary force of his utterances is not cancelled out, the marriage still occurred.

[1193] Suggestions in this sense resemble Austin's utterances, which are not "an inward and spiritual act." Culler, 18. If ordinary speakers intend to perform felicitous assertions, hypnotists (and fictional authors) only seem to "pretend" to do so (the question as to whether pretense counts as deception will be examined further down).

[1194] "If a scientific poetics is to be brought about, it must start with the factual assertion, founded on massive evidence, that there are such things as 'poetic' and 'prosaic' languages, each with their different laws." Šklovskij, 1919, in Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory,* 4.

[1195] Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," 320. Searle distinguishes fiction from literature: "Some works of fiction are literary works, some are not [*e.g. jokes, comic books*]. Nowadays most works of literature are fictional, but by no means all works of literature are fictional [*e.g. autobiography*]." Fictionality depends on authorial intention, whereas literariness does not: "whether or not a work is literature is for the readers to decide, whether or not it is fiction is for the author to decide." Searle, Ibid., 319; 320. See also Marie Louise Pratt, for whom literariness or poeticality is "anchored in the circumstances surrounding the utterance" rather than an intrinsic property or function of the utterance itself. Pratt, 73. Also, in Stanley Fish's famous 1980 experiment, students from a poetry class interpreted a vertical list of proper names of famous linguists on the blackboard—from the previous class—as a token of the religious poem they had been studying. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 322-323. Thus, "it is not that the presence of poetic qualities compels a certain kind of attention but the *paying of a certain kind of attention* results in the emergence of poetic qualities. Fish, Ibid., 326, emphasis added. See also Gerrig: "The 'look' of the language cannot differentiate factual and fictional assertions." Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 101.

Similarly, in *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (1977), Marie Louise Pratt refuses the formalist and structuralist claim that the language of literature is formally and functionally distinct from ordinary discourse; which is to say, that it has observable "properties that other utterances do not possess and is defined by those properties."[1196] As is the case for hypnosis, for Pratt, literariness or poeticity resides not "in the message" but in the literary speech situation, in the "particular disposition of the speaker and audience with regard to the message."[1197] Like hypnosis, "literature is a context, too, not the absence of one."[1198] Like the hypnotic subject, readers "constitute [themselves] into a voluntary audience," bringing generic expectations to the text, assuming that "it has been prepared, preselected and every part of it is intentional."[1199]

Our response to literature and hypnosis can thus be considered as one of cooperation, where the subject or reader helps fulfill the felicity conditions of the speech situation, by "understanding them in terms of the context in which they are made" literary, or hypnotic.[1200] A single, identical utterance can thus count as poetic, hypnotic or ordinary, depending on the context in which it is uttered, and more importantly, received.

3.1.1.3. Suspending Seriousness: The Pretense Theory

In this section I will briefly retrace the main arguments of the pretense theory, which emerged from Austin's famous description of the use of language in fiction as "nonserious," and states that literary utterances are stripped of their illocutionary force:

> A performative utterance will, for example, be *in a particular way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in a soliloquy. … Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but *parasitic* upon its normal use.[1201]

As Searle formulates it, the pretense theory asserts that fictional texts are composed of *pretended* illocutions, that are "made possible by a set of conventions which suspend the normal

[1196] Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse,* 4.
[1197] Pratt, Ibid., 99.
[1198] Ibid., 99.
[1199] "According to the rules for writing, a novel reader will assume the text is itself definitive, accurate, complete, stylistically appropriate, free of gross accidental errors, and 'worth it' unless he is invited to think otherwise." Pratt, 206. Similarly, although their sense might not always be clear to him, the hypnotic subject assumes that the utterances he receives are intentional, rather than attributing them to chance or an error on the part of the operator. Genres and subgenres can therefore to a certain extent be defined as systems of appropriateness conditions for literary texts.
[1200] Ibid, 121.
[1201] Austin, *How To Do Things,* 22.

operation of the rules relating illocutionary acts and the world."[1202] In this sense, "if I say, beginning a story, 'Once upon a in a faraway Kingdom a wise King who had a beautiful daughter,' that remark is literal but not serious."[1203] From this perspective, both novelists and hypnotists can be considered as "pretending ... to make an assertion, or going through the motions of making an assertion, or imitating the making of an assertion…as if one were doing or being the thing and is *without any intent to deceive.*"[1204]

Significantly, as Searle specifies, this form of pretending is nondeceptive, and should be clearly distinguished from lying: "what distinguishes fiction from lies is the existence of a separate set of conventions which enables the author to go through the motions of making statements which he knows to be not true even though he has no intention to deceive."[1205] In literature, "the pretended reference … creates the fictional character"—the novelist pretends that there is an object of reference, which "creates a fictional person" who readers can then [really] "refer to."[1206] The *serious* message of a work of literature is not its pretended assertions, but rather the non-represented speech act that is implicitly conveyed by the text.[1207]

Richard Ohmann also proposes a conception of literature as devoid of illocutionary force, where the author's speech-acts' lack "sincerity." For Ohmann, literary works are made up of quasi-

[1202]Ibid., 326. For Searle, fictional works can include nonfictional statements, such as Tolstoy's opening line "Happy families are all happy in the same way, unhappy families unhappy in their separate, different ways," which for him is a serious, not a fictional utterance. It is a genuine assertion, part of the novel but not of the fictional story. A work of fiction thus does not consist entirely in fictional discourse. Gerrig on the other hand objects to Searle that the "normal operation of the rules" can also be suspended when we read certain nonfictional texts, like an old newspaper using deictic references such as "this morning." Gerrig, 129.

[1203] Searle, Ibid., 321. In literature the usual conventions between language and reality suspend the illocutionary force of the utterances. For Searle, "telling stories is a separate language game" with a "separate set of conventions" but it is not a separate illocutionary act (for the meaning of the words don't change and we are not committed to the utterances as we would be to assertions). Ibid., 325.

[1204] Searle, 324, emphasis added. The author of fiction engages in a "nondeceptive pseudo performance which constitutes pretending to recount to us a series of events." He "pretends to perform illocutionary acts which he is not in fact performing." Ibid, 325.

[1205] Ibid., 326.

[1206] Ibid., 330. Regarding the truth value of fictional propositions: David Lewis includes the reader into the scope of the pretense theory: "the storytellers pretends to pass on historical information to their audience; the audience pretends to learn from their words, and to respond accordingly" (David Lewis, Postscript to "Truth in Fiction." In *Philosophical Papers,* vol 1. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 276. For Lewis, truth in in fiction cannot be reduced to what is explicit in the text. The concept of S-world states that the fictional world is composed of what is explicitly established as true by the text and whatever other information fills in the blanks. There may thus be several S-worlds. As Currie notes, in some S-worlds, Sherlock Holmes can be a robot, in others a Martian, and the text can remain unchanged. Currie, 63.

[1207] Searle, Ibid., 332. Like the embedded hypnotic suggestion or "message," the implicit literary speech act is "conveyed by the text but not in the text," except in children's stories or, Searle even adds, in "tiresomly didactic authors such as Tolstoy."

speech acts, their illocutionary force being suspended and "purportedly imitative."[1208] This suspension is what allows us to relate to literary utterances in a specifically "literary" manner, by attending to their implicit meanings or responding to them emotionally, rather than "pragmatically":

> Since the quasi-speech-acts of literature are not carrying on the world's business—describing, urging, contracting, etc.—the reader may well attend to them in a non-pragmatic way, and thus allow them to realize their emotive potential. In other words, the suspension of normal illocutionary forces tends to shift a reader's attention to the locutionary acts themselves and to their perlocutionary effects.[1209]

In this sense, our readiness to "discover and dwell on the implicit meanings in works of literature—and to judge them important" is a *consequence* of our knowing them to be literary works, rather than what indicates to us their "literary" nature.[1210]

3.1.1.4. Fictional Illocutionary Acts?

For Searle, it would be inconsistent with the "functionality principle" to claim that fiction-making is an illocutionary act.[1211] Nevertheless, some critics reject the pretense theory, and

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[1208] Richard Ohmann, "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 4 (1971): 14. "The writer pretends to report discourse, and the reader accepts the pretense. Specifically, the reader constructs (imagines) a speaker and a set of circumstances to accompany the quasi-speech act, and makes it felicitous (or infelicitous–for there are unreliable narrators, etc.)… a literary work purportedly imitates (or reports) a series of speech acts, which in fact have no other existence. By so doing, it leads the reader to imagine a speaker, a situation, a set of ancillary events, and so on." Ibid.

[1209] Ohmann, "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature," 17. Due to the suspension of their illocutionary force, literary utterances are also "impaired and incomplete" speech acts, which must be "complete[d] by supplying the appropriate circumstances." Ibid.

[1210] Pratt, *Toward A Speech Act Theory,* 116. Pratt objects to Ohmann that his definition of literariness relies on fictivity, when in fact "our daily discourse is full of fictive speech acts," such as jokes, parables, fables in political speeches, advertisements, thought experiments in philosophy, etc. For Pratt fictionality is not sufficient to distinguish literature from non-literature, as lack of illocutionary force can occur in a war scenario or scientific hypothesis, and is thus not specific to fiction: "it is not its quasi-ness that gives literature its world-creating capacity. Nonfictional narrative accounts are world-creating in the same sense as are works of literature, and, say, accounts of dreams." Ibid., 91; 95.

[1211] The functionality principle states that "the illocutionary acts performed in the utterance of a sentence is a function of the meaning of the sentence" and implies that a same sentence with the same meaning performs the same illocutionary acts. Searle, 320. Saying that fiction making is an illocutionary act would imply that the same sentence, with the same meaning, might then occur in fiction and nonfiction, and that we would therefore have the possibility that "distinct illocutionary acts could be performed on two occasions of utterance of one and the same sentence." Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 14. However, the same sentence uttered inside and outside of the hypnotic office will produce two different illocutionary acts. Thus, we would side with Currie, for whom "the same sentence can be used to perform distinct illocutionary acts." Currie also cites an example in Austin, where a burglar intent on seeing the contents of a room might pretend to clean the windows, and although he is actually removing the dirt with the appropriate materials in the appropriate way, cannot be considered as cleaning them. Currie, Ibid., 15. See Austin "Pretending" in *Philosophical Papers* (New York: Oxford University press, 1961). In hypnosis however, even if the

emphasize instead the "serious" dimension of literary utterances, or their illocutionary force.[1212] In *The Nature of Fiction,* for example, Gregory Currie argues that fictive utterances are genuine illocutionary acts. For him, fiction-making is the act of performing a *fictive, yet communicative* utterance, in order to fulfill specific, "fictive intentions."[1213] Fiction-making is thus a genuine, "characteristically fictional, illocutionary act."[1214]

For Currie, fictional status is acquired by a work not in the process of its reception, but of its making: "it is not any linguistic or semantic feature of the text that determines its fictionality, nor is it anything to do with the reader's response."[1215] Rather, the author's "fictional intent" is a determining criterion for fictionality. In the act of writing fiction, the author "intends" that the reader adopts a specific propositional attitude and "*make believe* that the story as uttered is true":[1216]

> When we make believe the story we make believe that the text is an account of events that have actually occurred … we have to see the text as the product of someone who has knowledge of those events. … Our make believe is not merely that the events described in the text occurred but that we are being told about

operator only pretends to assert x, and the subject genuinely pretends that x is true, x most of the time, actually becomes true.

[1212] In *Experiencing Narrative Worlds,* for instance, Richard Gerrig argues instead that authors perform serious acts with every utterance. For Gerrig, fictional propositions are "serious and sincere informative statements," directed at readers who take on the role of intended "side-participants"–that is, neither direct addressees nor mere overhearers. Unlike overhearers, side-participants are intended by the author to be "genuinely informed by narrative utterances" and must "construct a context different from the here and now that enables them to understand the fictional text." For Gerrig, side participation is "one of the unchangeable rules of the games of make-believe readers play with respect to [literary] texts." The intention of the author is thus a crucial component for determining fictionality: "the chief goal of reading is to recover the author's intended meanings in performing the utterances of a narrative." Gerrig, 130; 110; 137; 132. For Iser also, fictional language has the properties of the illocutionary act: it relates to conventions, entails procedures, which in the form of strategies help "guide the reader to an understanding of the selective processes underlying the text." It also has "the quality of performance" in that it "makes the reader produce the code covering the selection as the actual meaning of the text." Iser, *The Act of Reading.* 61.

[1213] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 11.

[1214] Ibid., 14.

[1215] Ibid., 12. Also "the presence of a preferred set of structural-generic features in a work cannot be sufficient conditions for its being fictional" For example a historical narrative does not become fictional by being given the structure of a tragedy." For Currie, "truth value offers no theoretically decisive test for fiction." Indeed, nonfictional texts—such as scientific treatises—often prove to be false, and conversely, "fictional texts, like texts of other kinds, can have the semantic properties of truth value and reference." Ibid., 4; 9. The fiction-nonfiction distinction is therefore a distinction between two kinds of illocutionary acts. "The claim that sentences in fiction have no truth value is based on a confusion of meaning and force" For Currie, sentences in fiction have no assortative force, but do have truth value: "they are sentences, true or false, that the author of fiction may produce without asserting them" Fictional authors have no assertive intention, otherwise *Robinson Crusoe* would be a lie, not a work of art. But while the proposition "Holmes smokes" is not true, the proposition "it is fictional that Holmes smokes" is true. Ibid., 6-7.

[1216] Ibid., 18. Similarly, deciding whether P belongs to the story is deciding whether F(P) is true: fictionality is a function, a 'propositional operator' from propositions to truth value. Also, since there is "no linguistic feature necessarily shared by all fictional works and necessarily agent from all nonfictional works" and as "it is possible for two works to be alike in verbal structures–right down to the details of spellings and word order–yet for one to be fiction and the other not." Ibid., 2-3.

> them by someone [*fictional]* who has knowledge of them. … To make believe a fictional story is not merely to make-believe that the story is true, but *that it is told as known fact*.[1217]

For Currie, in the act of reading, we thus "make-believe that there is a teller who does believe these things and whose beliefs are reliable."[1218] Fictional truths take the form: "It is true that in *Anna Karenina*, Anna dies.*"* Reading or remembering a novel thus involves, "playing the [one player] Anna Karenina game," where while we read, we make-believe that the proposition "Anna dies" is really true.[1219] Telling the story or reading it to another person is playing the game with two people. While discussing a novel in a group, "players make-believe they are debating about events that have occurred and about people who really exist," and so on.[1220] For Currie, the specificity of such games of make-believe is their "very loose formal structure," and the fact that they "depend heavily for their continuation on the creative imaginations of the players, and can be played without an intention on anybody's part of winning."[1221]

According to Currie, the two conditions for fictivity are the relations between the narrative events and actual events, and the fictive intentions on the part of the author: fictional truths are "jointly the product of the story's explicit content and what is true of the actual world," that is, "what is explicit in the story and overtly believed in the author's society."[1222] However, for him, fictionality is defined merely as a propositional *attitude,* that produces only quasi-beliefs. In hypnosis on the other hand, make-belief (momentarily) produces a reaction on a mode that resembles the effects of actual belief, with bodily and affective responses that occur without the subject having to consciously ascribe "truth value" to a body of propositions, even in pretense fashion.

[1217] Ibid., 73.

[1218] Currie, Ibid., 73. Currie's version of make believe differs from Walton's in that for Currie, "make-belief" is not something we do but a propositional operator, an attitude towards utterances: we don't "play," we attribute truth value to propositions. Or rather, "Each reader's reading generates a fiction …in which the reader plays the role of one in touch with the events of the story." Ibid.

[1219] And in this sense treating characters *as if* they were humans is necessary to forming a background for our understanding of the fictional work.

[1220] Ibid., 71.

[1221] Currie, 71.

[1222] Ibid., 65-67. For instance, in Henry James' time, the governess of *The Turn of the Screw* will be judged differently than in post-Freudian criticism. Currie then mobilizes the concept of an "informed reader," who "knows the relevant facts about the community in which the work was written," and is necessary since "the fictional author speaks to an audience of his own time and most likely, of his own culture." Ibid., 79- 80. One can see how this easily leads to an elitist conception of reading literature.

Therefore, Walton's concept of make-believe as something we *do* seems more adapted to the "hypnotic illusion" than Currie's definition of fictionality as the "speaker's" intention that the recipient temporarily relates to his propositions as if they were true.

3. 1. 2. Hypnotic Utterances as Serious Play

3.1.2.1. The Truth of Make-Believe

Hypnotists often invoke the example of children's games of make-believe to introduce and facilitate the production of hypnotic phenomena.[1223] As Marie Laura Ryan suggests, we learn to make-believe before we learn to "recognize the rigidity of the ontological boundary" that separates story-worlds from physical realities.[1224] In fact, for Kendall Walton, our responses to fictional worlds reveal a porosity between them and the actual world: we have a "strangely persistent inclination to think of fictions as sharing reality with us," a tendency "to regard them as part of our reality, despite our knowledge that they are not."[1225] For Walton:

> In order to understand paintings, plays films and novels, we must first look at dolls, hobbyhorses, toy trucks and teddy bears. … I advocate regarding these activities as games of make-believe themselves, and I shall argue that representational works function as props in such games, as dolls and teddy bears serve as props in children's games.[1226]

According to this famous description, fictional texts are also used as "props" in a game which consists in looking at something and regarding it as something else.[1227] When reading fiction, "players project themselves as members of the world" and play the game by generating fictional truths or propositions which are true in the game of make-believe.[1228] As part of games of make-

[1223] See Gombrich: "In the world of the child there is no clear distinction between reality and appearance… the basin does not "represent" a crash helmet, it *is* a kind of improvised helmet… there is no rigid division between the phantom and reality, truth and falsehood." Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 99. See also: "In the game of make-believe, stumps do not signify bears, they are *seen as* present animals. Every time a child sees a stump, she performs an action that counts in make-believe as an encounter with a bear… every time a player performs a legal move, she makes a contribution to the set of fictional truths that describes the game-world." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 107.
[1224] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 105.
[1225] Walton, "How remote are fictional worlds from the real world?" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 1 (1978): 19-20.
[1226] Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe,* 11. For Walton the game of make-believe of the reader involves three mutually dependent operations, which also occur in hypnosis: imagining oneself a member of the fictional world, pretending the propositions asserted by the "text" are true, and fulfilling the text's prescription to the imagination by constructing a mental image of the world.
[1227] The literary text is a prop which stands for the text of the narrator who tells the story *as true fact.*
[1228] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 116. For Walton, the basic fictional truth generated by a fictional text is that "it is fictional of the words of a narration that someone [other than the author] speaks or writes them." Walton, *Mimesis,* 356. Then, "propositions which are 'true in a novel,' 'true in (the world of) a picture,' etc. are '*fictionally*

believe, appreciators of fiction *pretend* to believe in characters. While readers do not *really* believe in the existence of fictional characters, nevertheless, "the emotions experienced in make-believe in the fictional world may carry over to the real world," causing "physical reactions such as crying or tensing up with fear," as they do in hypnosis.[1229]

In both literary and hypnotic games of make believe, participants willfully and temporarily focus their attention away from the fictionality of the world in which they are engaged. This involves a process of "entering" or "stepping into" a specific mode of being in which the aesthetic illusion operates thanks to the active performance of the reader-subject. Lilian Furst emphasizes this dimension in the act of reading realist fiction, "where we enter a realm which departs from the ordinary."[1230] As Furst explains, just as the traditional *Esto* served as a frame for poetry and

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true.' A novel or picture determines what is fictionally true; it "generates fictional truths. … Roughly, a fictional world consists of the fictional truths generated by a single work." For him, the work generates the "fictional truth that the narrator utters (or writes) certain words, *viz.,* the words contained in the text, which implies "all the other fictional truths which the work generates." Walton, "Points of View in Narrative and Depictive Representation." *Noûs* 10, no.1 (1976): 49; 54.

[1229] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 116. However, as Walton notes, fictional make-believe involves a different regime of belief and affective reaction than that involved in the everyday. For instance, if "Charles" was at the movies watching a horror movie about a creature made of slime taking over the city, "even a hesitant belief, a mere suspicion that the slime is real would induce any normal person seriously to consider calling the police" whereas in this case, "Charles is not uncertain whether the slime is real; he is perfectly sure it is not." Walton, "Fearing Fictions," *Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 1 (1978): 5- 7. Similarly, for Currie, "believing someone is in danger may cause me to alert the police; making believe he is will not." Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 197. While emotional responses are penetrated with beliefs, quasi-emotions merely involve make-beliefs. As Charles is participating in a game of make believe, so he is merely experiencing a quasi-fear of the slime : "the fact that Charles is quasi-afraid as a result of realizing that fictionally the slime threatens him is what generates the truth that fictionally he is afraid of the slime." Walton, *Mimesis,* 245. Similarly, for Gerrig, as a "side participant" rather than a direct addressee of the panicked news bulletin about the slime, Charles is not called to action. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds* 189. In hypnosis however, disbelief may be suspended in a way such as that the awareness of the game of make-believe does not always prevent reactions which blur the boundary between the "real" and the "imagined," as in hallucinations. In the same way, Gerrig notes that in many instances, such as those involving anomalous suspense or anomalous replotting, "reminding oneself that this is only fiction will not generally eliminate the effects of fictional information in the real world." Gerrig, 233. Illusion and strong affective reactions don't always imply belief. See Tamar Gendler's notion of "belief discordant-alief." Gendler defines aliefs as "innate or habitual propensities to respond to (possibly accurate) apparent stimuli in ways that are associate and automatic," such as clutching the seat while watching a horror film. For Gendler, "a paradigmatic alief is a mental state with associatively linked content that is representational, affective and behavioral, and that is activated—consciously or nonconsciously—by features of the subject's internal or ambient environment. Aliefs may be occurrent or dispositional." Gendler, "Alief and Belief," *Journal of Philosophy* 105, no. 10 (2008) 642. As Stjernberg notes, they correspond to a "cognitive state where we are affected by something that does not amount to a fully belief-inducing process," and differ from beliefs, which are "evidentially sensitive commitments to content." Fredrik Stjernberg, "A Puzzle of Fiction and Cognitive Impenetrability," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and The Arts,* 145; Gendler, *Intuition, Imagination and Philosophical Methodology* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2010), 14. Aliefs involve the "activation of an associative chain," similarly to the anchors—the association of an image, sound, word or other stimulus with an emotional reaction, belief, thought, etc.—used by hypnotists. Gendler, 650. Unlike the spectators of the Lumières Brothers watching *L'Arrivée d'un train en Gare de La Ciotat,* who mistook the thing representing for the thing represented, we don't run out of the cinema. The hypnotherapy client, on the other hand, if overwhelmed by affect, will open their eyes and exit the hypnotic experience.

[1230] Furst, 32.

classical literature,[1231] an implied "I imagine myself" or "let's pretend," also stands at the "portals" of realist fiction:[1232]

> Let's pretend' translates, linguistically, into the perception of the verbal artifact as a performance by readers. The command governing their performance would be 'imagine' in the case of a poem or fantastic fiction, 'suppose' or 'let's pretend' for a realist narrative. The introductory illocutionary word, though usually not voiced, forms a frame for the fictive discourse. It is this enframing that distinguishes an ordinary declarative sentence … from fictive discourse that contains as context a 'higher' sentence, such as 'I imagine (myself in) and invite you to conceive a world in which…[1233]

In both realism and hypnosis, this implied frame is the "portal of fiction" that traces the boundaries of the imaginary world, serving the double function of "containing" it and "bridging" the gap that separates fiction and reality.[1234] As a framing device, it also reiterates the "central paradoxically" of realist fiction in its "twin thrust toward truth and artifice."[1235] Like hypnotic subjects, when as readers, we skip the introductory phrase "*it's fictional that x*" or "*in the novel*," we are willfully "engaging in the pretense that underlies our readings."[1236]

Like the reader, the hypnotic subject is actively involved in the performance which "completes the frame by actualizing the illusion in their minds."[1237] Indeed, during a hypnotic induction, each proposition or suggestion includes "as context" the implied "*imagine*" without the

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[1231] Esto ("*Soit," "admettons"):* "it shall be," "let us admit, etc. Barthes describes it as the "sous-entendu au seuil de tout discours Classique" ("implied at the opening of all classical discourse"). See Barthes, "L'effet de réel," *Communications* 11 (1968): 88. See also Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* 2: 6.

[1232] Furst, *All Is True,* 32. In *S/Z* Barthes uses the image of the "empty frame which the realist author always carries with him (le cadre vide que l'auteur réaliste transporte toujours avec lui)." Barthes, *S/Z,* 61. Hypnosis makes an explicit use of framing techniques which circumscribes the 'realm' of the hypnotic experience and paradoxically eases the subject into it by making the transition from reality to hypnosis more reassuring. These techniques vary on a spectrum ranging between the extremes of deceitfully denying the presence of hypnosis altogether and calling it "pretending" on the one hand, and formally or exaggeratingly inflating the operator's "powers" as in the authoritative model on the other.

[1233] Furst, Ibid., 44. Final ellipsis in the text.

[1234] Furst, Ibid.., 48-49. Lisa Zunshine in *Why We Read Fiction,* provides an amusing explanation of Don Quixote's delusion by transposing this principle into cognitive terms: "from a cognitive psychological point of view… Don Quixote suffers from a selective failure of source monitoring. He takes in representations that 'normal' people store with a restrictive agent-specifying source tag such as 'told by the author of a romance' as lacking any such tag. He thus lets the information contained in romances circulate among his mental databases as architectural truth, corrupting his knowledge about the world." Our tendency to forget to add the "fictional" source tag is due to habit and energy saving cognitive priorities: "we do not trace back to the author every single representation contained in the text (once we have bracketed off the *whole* fictional text as metarepresentation. Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction, Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), 75; 80. In a similar vein, for Currie, "The operator F [*fictional*] is often suppressed in our ordinary talk" if it is agreed that we are talking about the fictional world: we need not specify it with every utterance. Currie, 57.

[1235] Furst, *All is True,* 49.

[1236] Furst, Ibid., 32.

[1237] Ibid., 65. In reading, the "imaginative response" of the reader "is a performance, an implementation of the assent to pretense," as "the construction of the text by readers who proceed *as if they believed in it* leads to the actualization of the text as realistic." Ibid., 33.

operator having to repeat it with every utterance.[1238] In realist aesthetics and traditional hypnosis, the implied instruction is often kept inconspicuous, to suppress, as far as possible, those elements that would reveal the fictional status of the discourse.

Hypnotic games of make-believe often find the subject becoming so engaged that the very question of the ontological status of the "reality" being experienced is set aside and becomes secondary, even if temporarily.[1239] Indeed, in hypnosis there comes a point where the question of drawing out a precise boundary between the real and imaginary becomes irrelevant. Similarly, as Gombrich writes about aesthetic reception, "In the twilight region of the symbolic, the distinction between reality and make-believe is itself unreal … no such questions are asked, and therefore no answers need be given."[1240] Once the recipient has crossed the frame and 'entered' the domain of fiction, "reality" no longer refers to the actual existence of objects in the "exterior" world, but rather, qualifies the depth and detail with which objects present themselves to the attention—which is to say, how real they *appear* in the moment, within the "brackets" of the attention field.[1241]

3.1.2.2. Active Actualizations: The Role of the Subject

Although the aesthetic illusion depends on the conjunction of multiple factors—involving subject, creator, and context—hypnosis and novel reading ascribe similar roles to the subject in the constitution of the work.[1242] As I will argue in this section, even if the recipient's mind's is "guided" by the illusionist artefact, the hypnotic-novelistic subject is not passive but rather a co-

[1238] On the other hand, preserving and pronouncing the explicit instruction "pretend/imagine that" can (as is often practiced in modern hypnosis) also *encourage* immersion in the subject, who is reassured by the 'fictional' dimension of the experience, and thus enters it more readily.
[1239] In permissive hypnosis, the "as if" model allows the operator to reassure the subject by announcing that there is absolutely no need to ascribe any ontological status to the "truths" or "phenomena" generated by the hypnotic discourse. Similarly, on the side of the author, the "implied utterance" preceding the fictional proposition might thus merely declare the presence of a fictional statement without involving the question of its sincerity or truth value. See for example Genette: "For a story beginning with once upon a time, the author's speech act can be paraphrased as "I, author, hereby decided fictionally, by adapting both the words to the world and the world to the words and without fulfilling any sincerity condition (without believing it or asking [the reader] to believe it), that p…." Gérard Genette, "The Pragmatic Status of Narrative Fiction." *Style,* 24 (1990): 63.
[1240] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 99.
[1241] For example, in many novels, round, fictional characters can feel more "real" (that is, complex) than the flatter albeit "real" (i.e. "immigrant" or "surrogate") objects or figures which are represented in the fictional world.
[1242] "The conjunction of factors that … are located in the artefact ([or] performance) itself, in the recipient, and in certain cultural and historical contexts." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction,"330.

creates the work by actively participating in the aesthetic illusion.[1243] In this sense, a similar movement can be traced in the history of hypnosis and of literary theory, where authority and responsibility for the success of the aesthetic-hypnotic illusion has shifted, from the author-operator, to the active, imaginative, and meaning-constituting intentionality of the subject.[1244] This activity of the subject and the individuality of each actualization are the two aspects that bring hypnotic and readerly subjectivity together.

Reader-response theory and phenomenologically oriented criticism have insisted heavily on the reader's role in the constitution of the literary text, arguing that "the author brings the words, the reader the meaning."[1245] As Roman Ingarden famously argued, the literary work of art (in its written form) is an incomplete object that must be actualized by the reader into an aesthetic object, which the reader performs by filling in the gaps, the places of indeterminacy—the *Unbestimmheitsstellen*—in the text, on the basis of their own unique experience and knowledge.[1246] Similarly, the hypnotic subject must fill in the indeterminacies left by the operator, and must both constitute and perform the meaning of the hypnotic utterances. This notion is built into the presuppositions of permissive, modern hypnotherapy: "frequently, Erickson will suggest or imply that what he says is not important. Only the patient's interpretation of what he says is important … so that each client could 'fill in the blank'."[1247] The reader and subject must decipher,

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[1243] For its success, aesthetic illusion presupposes "the implicit acceptance of a 'reception contract'." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion. Towards a Media-Conscious Theory of Media-Elicited Immersion as a Transmedial Phenomenon," 33. Conversely, "illusionist texts and artefacts do not merely offer experiential immersion in a passive way; they actively appeal to the readers and thereby also contribute to minimalizing aesthetic distance" Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 341.See also Gombrich's notion of "guided projection." Gombrich, 169.

[1244] "Immersion requires an active engagement with the text and a demanding act of imagining." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 15. Indeed, as Ryan notes, it is a demanding mental activity to "form a mental image of the fictional world" and "convert the temporal flow of language into a spatial configuration of meaning." While visual media are inherently immersive, "text requires a far greater mental activity to translate its signs into representation… it takes concentration to achieve immersion, because language itself offers no data to the senses (except for the look, feel and the smell of the book, which are usually not related to the message). All sensory data must therefore be simulated by the imagination." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 125; 133

[1245] Frye in Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 27. See also See Stanley Fish: interpreters "do not decode poems, they make them." Fish, *Is There a Text?*, 327.

[1246]"The medium dependent, unavoidable indeterminate areas of in verbal discourse, similar to the grain in analog photography." Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1931), 261; Wolf, *Aesthetic Illusion(s)?,"* 44.

[1247] Rossi, *Hypnotic Realities*, 272; Slosar, in *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis,* 123. See also Gombrich: "the amount of information reaching us from the visible world is incalculably large, and the artist's medium is inevitably restricted and granular. *Even the most meticulous realists…. will have to rely on suggestion* when it comes to representing the infinitely small"; "The beholder [of the painting] must mobilize his memory of the visible world and project it into the mosaic of strokes and dabs on the canvas before him… Here… the principle of guided projection reaches its climax. The image… has no firm anchorage left on the canvas—it is only 'conjured up' in our minds. *The willing beholder responds to the artist's suggestion* because he enjoys the transformation that occurs in front of his

convert or translate utterances or signifiers, constituting them into an internal experience which is stable and meaningful enough to then serve as a basis to interpret the rest of the (hypnotic or literary) work as it unfolds.[1248] As Ryan notes, "from the point of view of the reader … the text is like a musical score waiting to be performed."[1249] As with hypnotic discourse—which relies heavily on the verbally-centered interpretative acts of the recipient for the constitution of its meaning and efficacy—"it is in the reader that the text comes to life." [1250]

This is not to say that the recipient does not let himself be guided by the text. As Furst describes it, the "creativity" of the author/narrator serves as "the triggering part" of a more extensive process in which readers' imagination is an indispensable agent.[1251]

Just as for Wolfgang Iser, the literary work itself is neither the text, nor the concretization, but rather, "must be situated somewhere between the two," the hypnotic experience is a collaboration between operator and subject in which the subject produces the meaning of the speaker's utterances.[1252] In hypnosis, the subject reacts to the suggestions in a manner very close to Iser's description of the reader: "the reader is not simply called to 'internalize' the positions given in a text, but he is induced to make them act upon and so transform each other, as a result of which the aesthetic object begins to emerge."[1253] Hypnosis is thus a subtle and sophisticated act of creating and allowing an aesthetic object to emerge through acts of interpretation, imagination, and the effect of these act on one another, following the unfolding of the verbal utterances.

In the case of the realist novel, the aesthetic illusion—like hypnotic rapport—depends on a certain degree of faith in the narrator's trustworthiness and reliability.[1254] To establish this trust,

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eyes… The artist gives the beholder increasingly 'more to do', he draws him into the magic circle of creation and allows him to experience something of the thrill of 'making' which had once been the privilege of the artist"; All painting, even naturalist, "relies on our knowledge, on our faculty to project and to supplement what was left indistinct." Gombrich, 220; 202; 217, emphasis added.

[1248] See also: "There are obviously two conditions that must be fulfilled if the mechanism of projection is to be set in motion. One is that the beholder must be left in no doubt about the way to close the gap; secondly, that he must be given a 'screen', an empty or ill-defined area onto which he can project the expected image." Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 208.

[1249] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 45. See also: "When we hold a book in our hands, all we hold is paper. The book is elsewhere." Robert Escarpit, *The Book Revolution* (London: Harrap, 1966), 17.

[1250] Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 19. As Gombrich has shown, the beholder of a painting also engages in the act of interpreting conventions and translation of information.

[1251] Ibid., 72.

[1252] Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 21. As Iser notes, in literature, the meaning must be produced by the reader "even though it is restructured by the signs given in the text." Ibid.

[1253] Ibid., 203.

[1254] "Readers' willingness to (pretend to) believe is dependent on the degree of trust that the narrative voice can evince." Furst, *All is True* 55.

like hypnotic operators, realists authors "took care to cultivate the image of reliability and stability in their narrators" who "can have unhampered access to the systems of knowledge that inform and govern the text."[1255] It is important to note that both in literature and in hypnosis, establish reliability does not necessarily entail the display of omniscience, in a Balzacian fashion. For example as Furst observes, the Jamesian narrator—like the modern hypnotist who adopts a position of "unknowing"—establishes his own reliability by making "repeated confessions of not knowing" and admitting his own limitations to "enhance the profile of honesty."[1256] In fact, the shift from omniscient narration to an "honest yet limited" perspective in novelistic aesthetics mirrors the shift, in the history of hypnosis, from the omnipotent to the permissive operator: whereas the former was invested with knowledge and power, the latter gains trust by adapting horizontally to the level of the subject's worldview. In the history of hypnosis and of the novel, "the balance changes with the decline in the narrator's absolute suzerainty over the fiction and the concomitant expansion of the readers' input."[1257]

As in modern hypnosis, for Furst, realist "consensus" is best achieved through co-construction, cooperation, and "entering together" the realm of fiction or "conjoint fashioning of the frame."[1258] Fictional narrators and hypnotic operators can thus be described in similar fashion:

> To read realist fiction is to engage in a performative act. It is a cooperative venture transacted in the medium of the text by narrator and readers functioning in a consensual entente. The narrator initiates, directs, and prompts the delineation and unfolding of the fictional world, which readers grasp through the denotative and connotative aspects of language as well as through metaphor.[1259]

Similarly, the utilizational approach in modern hypnotherapy stresses the interactional nature of the hypnotic relationship. The hypnotic endeavor is "a cooperative effort in which responsibility is mutually assumed" and where "the hypnotist's task is to guide and supervise the subject," whose "task is to decide if, how, and when to respond to the hypnotist's communications."[1260] In this context, trance is defined not as the dissolution of self or annihilation of the intellect, but as "an opportunity for the subject to set aside his identification with any limiting conscious processes and shift into a context where he/she can access and utilize unconscious resources for therapeutic

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[1255] Ibid., 55.
[1256] Ibid..
[1257] Ibid., 65.
[1258] Ibid., 66.
[1259] Ibid., 172-173.
[1260] Stephen Gilligan, "Ericksonian Approaches to Clinical Hypnosis," in *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy,* ed. J. Zeig (New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1982), 89.

gain."[1261] Like the novelist, the hypnotist works to "secure and hold" the subject's attention, not subject him.

And indeed, as François Roustang observes, if the hypnotic subject feels compelled to obey a suggestion, it is not because of the irresistible power of the operator but because he or she feels bound by the contract which he has implicitly agreed to, on which the experience depends to succeed.[1262] This act of voluntary cooperation occurs both in modern permissive and older authoritative models of hypnosis. While the former makes it visible—as do eighteenth-century, and postmodern narrators—however, the latter strives to dissimulate it—as do realist ones. In the first case, this freedom is acknowledged, while in the other, its acknowledgment is temporarily or functionally suspended, placed in the background.

In both cases, however, in "binding" himself in the hypnotic contract he makes with himself (rather than the operator), the subject remains free and autonomous throughout. A similar type of cooperation occurs in the implicit contract that ties narrators and readers together in immersive reading.[1263]

Richard Gerrig emphasizes this "optional" dimension of readerly participation: since "a text cannot force a reader to experience a narrative world," an author's "expertise consists partially in creating circumstances that will reliably prompt readers to undertake optional activities."[1264] As in modern permissive hypnosis, readers can either participate in the game, or stay skeptical. Specifically, faced with the claims to truthfulness of realist narrators, "we as readers have a number of options. We may choose to enter into a collusive complicity with the narrator. Willingly suspending disbelief, and agreeing to accept the narrative as a paradigmatic sample" of real events, or adopt a posture of detachment, maintaining our skepticism, vis à vis "an artifact of the

[1261] Gilligan 89. Indeed, the operator's responsibility is to stimulate and maintain the subject's interest and cooperation by adapting to them. Especially, subjects in a deep trance must be dealt with "very gingerly to keep from losing their cooperation" as they "successfully resist when unwilling or more interested in other projects." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 19.

[1262] "[The suggested task] is a task which awaits me and I cannot abandon it without breaking the contract by failing to respect the conditions of the experience which I wish to go through. Roustang, 60.

[1263] For example, Furst's description of the narrative contract strongly resembles those of hypnotic rapport found in medical literature: "the establishment of a sound, trusting relationship between narrating voice and readers, a secure narrative contract that dispose readers to persuasion by the rhetoric." Furst, *All is True*. ix. See also descriptions of the novel as pretense descriptive utterances made by a trusted speaker. For example: "Realistic novels… are like the experience of being told about life by someone whom we trust." Douglas Hewitt, *The Approach to Fiction* (London: Longman, 1972), 55.

[1264] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds* 5; 241.

imagination."[1265] Hypnosis and realism thus depend heavily on the recipient's compliance for their success,[1266] and immersion is the result of the act or activity of reading: the product of the reader, not the author or the text. As Iser shows, subscribing to the aesthetic illusion of realism is a performance carried out by the recipient:

> The aesthetic semblance can only take on its form by way of the recipient's ideational, performative activity, and so representation can only come to full fruition in the recipient's imagination; it is the recipient's performance that endows the semblance with its sense of reality.[1267]

Indeed, in hypnosis as in literature, the aesthetic illusion is not "a kind of mental state generated in the reader's mind by the aesthetic powers of the text" but a "stance or attitude that the reader is supposed to adopt, by making certain interpretive moves, in order to get access to the literary functions of the text."[1268] The reader *does something* to *allow the text* to fulfill its literary functions, just like the hypnotic subject grants and gives permission (mainly to themselves) in the implicit hypnotic contract.

Just as for Dewey, "to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience," all hypnosis is—as we mentioned higher up—ultimately, self-hypnosis.[1269] This explains why the same utterances and behavior on the part of the operator, even the same hypnotic script or recording, will not only produce different results in different subjects, but will likely also differ for the same individual in different occurrences.[1270] As with literature, hypnotic "interpretation" differs with

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[1265] Furst, *All is True,* 12.

[1266] The imaginary in Iser's sense does not refer to a fictional or factual object represented by the text, but to a reality built up by the reader, an "unformed reality that is to be construed in the process of reading." Tomáš Koblížek, "Introduction," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017),18. Iser's concept emphasizes not merely the ability of literary texts to draw the reader into the represented world, but rather, like hypnosis, in its ability to "engage the reader in the very process of the world-making" Ibid.,18. For Iser's replacement of the fiction-reality dyad with the "fictive-real-imaginary" triad, see *The Fictive and the Imaginary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University press, 1993), 1-4. See also Barthes: "L'enjeu du travail littéraire (de la littérature comme travail), c'est de faire du lecteur non plus le consommateur, mais un producteur du texte (What is at stake in the literary work (in literature as work), is not to make the reader not the consumer, but the producer of the text)."Barthes, *S/Z,* 10.

[1267] Iser, "Representation: A Performative Act," in *The Aims of Representation,* ed. Murray Krieger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 226.

[1268] Petr Kotátko, "Fiction, Illusion, Reality and Radical Narration," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 193.

[1269] John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 54. Similarly, "the reader is absorbed into what he himself has been made to produce through the image; he cannot help being affected by his own production." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 140.

[1270] See Derrida to Ornette Coleman: "we know ourselves by what we believe... it's universal, we know or believe we know what we are through the stories that are told to us." Jacques Derrida, "The Other's Language: Jacques Derrida Interviews Ornette Coleman, 23 June 1997," trans. T. S. Murphy, *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 37:2 (2004): 326. See also Wolf: "a recipient's illusionist response is not only subject to external, contextual circumstances but is also heavily dependent on individual factors such as his or her range of experience, age, gender, interests, cultural background, and ability to "read" works of art aesthetically. The illusionist response further depends on the reception

every act of interpretation, and "stems from the complexity of the mediation between what is there, physically [a stream of utterances/words], and what is made out of it."[1271] This also explains the anti-theoretical, constructivist framework of modern permissive hypnosis, which provides the flexibility required to adapt to each empirical hypnotic situation.

3.1.2.3. Who Says I?

Modern hypnosis and novels are narrative activities that reveal, shape, and filter our comprehension of the world.[1272] Both rely on the idea that our descriptions, concepts, and belief-systems influence the way we see reality.[1273] According to the constructivist framework used by modern hypnosis, "the experiencing consciousness creates structure in the flow of its experience," which is then experienced by the individual as "reality."[1274] Rather than passively acquired, knowledge thus "originates as the product of an active subject's activity," taking place "within the experiential world of a goal-directed consciousness."[1275] Therefore, the world we experience is,

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conditions, e. g., whether a novel is read for the first time or not, and, last but not least, on the recipient's willingness… to become immersed in an illusionist reception." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 334.

[1271] Ryan, Ibid., 45.

[1272] Indeed, "languages of description are not neutral. Every descriptive language makes assumptions, and these help to shape what is described." Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* ix**.**

[1273] Implicit in the therapeutic use of this framework is the idea that the usefulness of a belief or proposition is of greater importance than its truth value. This mirror the question addressed to novels (what "knowledge" comes out of fictional or imaginary experience? Rather than skepticism, relativism or nihilism, radical constructivism opens up the space to absolute freedom and responsibility of the subject. As a form of self-knowledge rather than passivity, hypnosis places us, like novel reading, in a position of responsibility towards these "very beliefs, attitudes, and intentions that constitute one's inner life." Ong, *The Art of Being,* 4. Furthermore, the phenomenological concept of the world existing only insofar as it is posited by a subject also allows one to defend hypnotic and poetic discourse against accusations of mystification (one of their principle epistemic 'dangers') once it is assumed that there is no natural or objective reality to be driven away from.

[1274] Ernst Von Glasersfeld, "An Introduction to Radical Constructivism," in *The Invented Reality,* ed. Paul Watzlawick (New York and London: Norton & Company, 1984), 38. See also Gombrich: the "inductivist ideal of pure observation [*naturalism]* has proved a mirage in science no less than in art*. The very idea that it should be possible to observe without expectation, that you can make your mind an innocent blank on which nature will record its secrets, has come in for strong criticism.* Every observation, as Karl Popper has stressed, is a result of a question we ask nature, and every question implies a tentative hypothesis. We look for something because our hypothesis makes us expect certain results"; "what we see does not directly and immediately reveal to us 'what is there'… we can only guess, and our guess will be influenced by our expectation"; "expectation create[s] suggestion" ; *"*When we are aware of the process of filing, we say 'interpret', where we are not we say 'we see.' From this point of view, there is also a difference of degree rather than of kind between what we call a 'representation' and what we call an 'object of nature'." Gombrich, 321; 249; 204; 105, emphasis added.

[1275] Ibid. 31-32. Radical constructivism defines knowledge as "exclusively an ordering and organization of a world constituted by our experience" and the "selecting activity" of consciousness. Indeed, "the radical constructivist has relinquished metaphysical realism once and for all and finds himself in full agreement with Piaget, who says 'intelligence organizes the world by organizing itself.'" Ibid., 24. See Jean Piaget, *La Construction du réel chez l'enfant* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1937), 311; and: "a statement about the world is not straightforwardly either

and must be, as it is, because we have put it together in that way."[1276] Like a novel, it is a composition.[1277]

More specifically, according to Ernst Von Glasersfeld's "Introduction to Radical Constructivism," a cognitive organism or consciousness "produces" regularities in its experiential world via "assimilation," even when experience is "chaotic."[1278] To the assimilating consciousness, what an object is, matters much less than whether it "fits" in the system, whether it performs or behaves in the way that is expected of it.[1279] Knowing is thus not "the search for an iconic representation of ontological reality" but "a search for fitting ways of behaving and thinking."[1280] For the radical constructivist, reality is "created almost entirely without the experiencer's awareness of his or her creative activity" and "comes to appear as given by an independently existing world."[1281]

As Furst notes, "the ultimate message of constructivism is the need to study how worlds are constructed" instead of "sizing [them] up against some in itself indisputable 'reality' for their degree of truthfulness or distortion."[1282] Indeed, the most fundamental trait of constructivist epistemology is that "the world which is constructed consists of experiences and makes no claim whatsoever about 'truth' in the sense of a correspondence with ontological reality."[1283]

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true or false," it "may be true of the world relative to one theory and false relative to another." Currie, 105. As Currie notes, this statement implies the abandonment of realism. See Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), x.

[1276] Von Glasersfeld., 30. "The extent to which this will succeed depends far more on the goals and the already constructed starting points than on what might be given in so called 'reality.' But in our experience, which is always determined by the goals we have chosen, we … tend to ascribe the obstacles we meet to a mythical reality rather than to the way in which we operate." Ibid. 37. On a psychological level this corresponds to the filtering out of experience via cognitive biases and to the unconscious reproduction of cycles of information selection which confirm the subject's preexisting beliefs. It is important to note that in this sense, "goals" can also be destructive or misery inducing, as in symptom formation for example.

[1277] "Every man's world picture is and always remains a construct of his mind and cannot be proved to have any other existence." Erwin Schrödinger, *Mind and Matter,* in *The Invented Reality*, epigraph.

[1278] Von Glasersfeld, 30. For example, categories like "sameness" or "difference" are always the result of an examination with regards to specific properties, the criteria by means of which we establish them are "created and chosen by the judging, experiencing subject and cannot be ascribed to an experiencer-independent world." So "both regularity and constancy presuppose repeated experience, and repetition can be established only on the basis of a comparison that yields a judgment of sameness," which is always relative. Ibid., 35-36.

[1279] See also: "reading" [an image] is "testing it for its potentialities, trying out what fits." Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 227.

[1280] Von Glasersfeld, 39.

[1281] Ibid., 38.

[1282] Furst, 41. Indeed, "once the idea of some aboriginal reality is relinquished, the criterion of correspondence is supplanted as the primary way of distinguishing true from false models of the world" (Furst, 40). See also Todorov: Fiction can be "neither true nor false but simply fictional." Todorov, "The Notion of Literature," *New Literary History* 5, no.1 (1973): 7.

[1283] Von Glasersfeld, "An Introduction to Radical Constructivism," 29.

On a psychological level, the assimilating action of consciousness leads to a circular regime of causality, most notable in the creation of unconscious self-fulfilling prophesies, which constitute and solidify the subject's experience and conception of reality.[1284] As Paul Watzlawick argues in *The Invented Reality*, "an action that results from a self-fulfilling prophecy itself produces the requisite conditions for the occurrence of the expected event" and thus "creates a reality which would not have arisen without it."[1285] Because all perception of reality involves this process, "there is no illusion, because there is only illusion."[1286] Similarly, in *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich has emphasized the interpretative dimension of sensory—especially visual—perception:

> It is the power of expectation rather than the power of conceptual knowledge that molds what we see in life no less than in art…Every time we scan the distance we somehow compare our expectation, our projection, with the incoming message. It is always we who send out these tentacles into the world around us, who grope and probe, ready to withdraw our feelers for a new test.[1287]

In beholding images, but also in reading and listening to speech or verbal utterances, it is difficult to distinguish "what is given to us" from "what we supplement in the process of projection which is triggered off by recognition"—or, as Gombrich also calls it, "guessing."[1288] In other words in

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[1284] "The course of events is induced by the very measures which are undertaken as a (supposed) reaction to the expected event in question... what is supposed to be a reaction (the effect) turns out to be an action (the cause); the solution produces the problem; the prophecy of the event causes the event of the prophecy." Paul Watzlawick, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecies," in *The Invented Reality* (New York and London: Norton & Company, 1984), 97.

[1285] Watzlawick, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecies," 96. "The action that is at first neither true nor false produces a fact, nd with it its own 'truth'… An assumption believed to be true creates the assumed reality." Ibid., 97.

[1286] Watzlawick, "The Illusion of 'Illusion'," in *Aesthetic Illusion,* ed. F. Burwick and W. Pape (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1990), 27.

[1287] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 225. "We all probe the distant and indeterminate for possible classifications, which we then test and elaborate in a game of projections… We must always rely on guesses, on the assessment of probabilities, and on subsequent tests, and in this there is an even transition from the reading of symbolic material to our reaction in life" E.g. "interpreting, classifying a shape affects the way we see its color," and we are often in a state of "readiness to start projecting, to thrust out the tentacles of phantom colors and phantom images which always flicker around our perceptions." Ibid., 225; 227. See: "what is perceived shapes the subjectivity of how it is perceived, and allows for novel expansions of perceiving." Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 161.

[1288] Gombrich, Ibid., 242. For Gombrich, our interpretations are all selections, without which we would be lost, since "our inability to see ambiguity often protects us from the knowledge that 'pure' shapes allow of an infinity of spatial readings." In this sense, "What we call seeing is invariably colored and shaped by our knowledge (or belief) of what we see. This becomes clear enough whenever the two are at variance" (it is because we can take one thing for another that the eye can be deceived by an illusionist picture"). "The 'Egyptian' [i.e. *painting what we know rather than what we see]* in us can be suppressed, but he can never be quite defeated… [He] ultimately stands for the active mind, for that 'effort after meaning' which cannot be defeated without out world's collapsing into total ambiguity." Ibid., 221-222; 394-5. See also Wollheim's Kleinian account of the developmental origins of projection: "expulsive phantasy dyes the world, and it is the dye that gives the world its new projective properties," and his concept of expressive perception, whereby "emotion, aroused by what we see, comes to color our perception of what we see." Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 84; and *The Thread of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 138. See Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 157; 161.

finding the world as we do, "we forget all we did to find it as such. … A description, when carefully inspected, reveals the properties of the observer."[1289]

Modern hypnotherapists adopt this constructivist framework because of its strong therapeutic potential, which stems from the possibilities that open up once the subject begins to acknowledge and explore alternative ways to "construct" reality. Indeed, as Watzlawick writes:

> He who suffers from his own being in the world is caught in his own fly-bottle; the attempted 'solution' is his problem, and only by stepping outside the vicious circle of problem-'solution' and 'solution'-caused-problem can he discover that reality can be constructed differently. Of course, this other reality is again precisely this: a construction, but a construction that fits better, will not only be less painful to live in but will convey that undefinable feeling of being 'in tune' without which man cannot survive psychologically.[1290]

The power of "reframing" or "restorying" is thus at the heart of therapeutic approaches based on the constructivist model. Nevertheless, this conception does not go without its ethical and political dangers:

> The discovery that we create our own realities is comparable to the expulsion from the paradise of the presumed suchness of the world, a world in which we can certainly suffer, but for which we need only feel responsible in a very limited way. And here lies the danger … the insights of constructivism … can also be abused. Advertising and propaganda are two especially repugnant examples… thanks to this brainwashing the world is then seen as 'thus' and therefore is thus.[1291]

Indeed, as Gillian puts it, "while tools are value-free, their capacity to enhance or create is equivalent to their potential to oppress or destroy."[1292] According to Watzlawick, the antidote against these potential abuses lies in the ethical framework of the practitioner, as well as the acknowledgment of the responsibility of the subject.[1293] The freedom, cooperation, activity, and

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[1289] Fransisco Varela, "A Calculus for Self-Reference." *International Journal of General Systems* 1, no. 2 (1975): 24.
[1290] Watzlawick, "The Fly and the Fly-Bottle," in *The Invented Reality* (New York and London: Norton & Company, 1984), 255.
[1291] Watzlawick, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecies," in *The Invented Reality,* 111-12. As Joseph Goebbels himself noted in a lecture to managers of German radio station on March 25, 1933: "This is the secret of propaganda: To totally saturate the person, whom the propaganda wants to lay hold of, with the ideas of the propaganda, without him even noticing that he is being saturated. Propaganda has of course a purpose, but this purpose must be disguised with such shrewdness and virtuosity that he who is supposed to be filled with this purpose never even knows what is happening." Quoted in Watzlawick, Ibid., 112**.** Saturation is indeed an induction technique commonly used by hypnotists– sometimes called cognitive overload. Here one can also note the vocabulary of passivity and the metaphor of being "filled up," which correspond to the nineteenth-century popular conception of hypnosis as a dangerous practice.
[1292] Stephen Gilligan, "Ericksonian Approaches to Clinical Hypnosis," 101.
[1293] The moral integrity of the operator is the *sine qua non* for both the ethical foundation and the therapeutic success of hypnosis, which cannot do without the subject's cooperation–based on trust. In the Ericksonian context, the integrity of the operator is defined as "the degree to which the hypnotist is able to refrain from imposing his own solutions and beliefs on the subject" and instead fully support the subject in his quest for change and discovering his own resources. Without this fundamental integrity, an operator can "obtain hypnotic phenomena" (as in stage hypnosis) but "not hypnotherapeutic changes." Indeed, "most hypnotic subjects will quickly learn to distrust and hence not cooperate with a non-supportive hypnotist." Gilligan, Ibid., 102-103. No facts, only interpretations: "No first-order Reality exists, just an infinite number of second-order realities with no criteria for judging them except, perhaps, utility." John O. Beahrs, "Understanding Erickson's Approach," in *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy* (New

thus responsibility, of the latter are thus crucial components in preserving both the ethical foundations and the therapeutic success of hypnosis. As Watzlawick writes:

> The invented reality will become 'actual' reality only if the invention is believed … with the better understanding of self-fulfilling prophecies our ability to transcend them grows. …The possibility of choosing differently (of being a heretic) and of disobeying always exists. …A prophecy that we know to be only a prophecy can no longer fulfill itself.[1294]

The malleability of the self can also be understood with pragmatist philosophy. Indeed, in "Does consciousness exist?," William James defines consciousness not a separate and autonomous spiritual entity but as an organizing function, an activity, a center of reference within the field of givenness or pure experience.[1295] For James, "I" and "me" signify no transcendental substance, but rather, are "names of emphasis."[1296] In this context, "the word 'I' is primarily a noun of position, just like 'this' and 'here'."[1297] It is an "indexical," a demonstrative, belonging to that class of "words that require a familiarity with the context in which they are being used before that to which they are referring can be known."[1298] As Benson notes, although it forms the origin of a complex system of coordinates, an active centered position from which and to which references are made, "this position is not fixed and given; it is instead incessantly mobile."[1299] In this sense, I is nothing but a succession of changing plural points of view, there can be no single abiding point of view. Rather, points of view are "inherently relational," always *on* or *about* something."[1300] They are "constituted and sustained by interaction with the world," they are "labile and

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York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1982), 62. See also: "a photograph [taken] from any perspective is no more 'true' nor 'false' than another; it is a valid portrayal of one aspect of Reality, but different from equally valid photographs taken from different perspectives." None approaches reality more than another, but "we know more of it [reality] when we view it from more perspectives." The therapist then must "become proficient with several seemingly different frameworks." Ibid., 62; 80. Hence the (ethical) importance of flexibility.

[1294] Watzlawick, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecies,"113. Wittgenstein also notes that certain games can be won with a simple trick: if someone calls our attention to this trick, we no longer have to continue playing naively and keep losing the game. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 100. Nigel Howard states a similar idea: "if a person becomes 'aware' of a theory concerning his behavior, he is no longer bound by it but is free to disobey it." Nigel Howard, "The Theory of Metagames" *General Systems 11* (1967): 167.

[1295] William James, "Does Consciousness Exist?" *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1, no. 18 (Sept. 1904). In John McDermott, ed. *The Writings of William James* (New York: Random House, 1968), 169-183. According to James' anti-dualism, the field of pure experience contains no given distinction between a subject-entity and independent object-entities. As Benson notes, it is "given with the body as its center." Benson, 89.

[1296] James, *The Principles of Psychology,* vol. 1 (London: Dover Publications, 1950), 341.

[1297] James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (London: Longmans, Green & Co,1912), 69.

[1298] Benson, Ibid., 89. Indexicals include terms such as 'This', 'here' or 'now.' As Benson notes, indexicals "always insist on bringing their context with them": the word "now," for instance, needs to have its boundaries specified to have meaning. The goal is to show how the indexicality of the linguistic "I" then influences the context dependency of the psychological "I." Benson, 91, emphasis added.

[1299] Ibid., 90.

[1300] Ibid., 122.

mobile."[1301] In non-referential theories of the self like James', a personal point of view is a point in the stream of consciousness, a "moving point," comparable to the "restless cursor on the computer screen" which "moves and changes with the stream of experience. It especially changes with shifts of intentionality [thought-content]."[1302] Here too, "there is no subject to which I refers, only I-thoughts."[1303]

Furthermore, as Benson notes, "if I is indeed a word of position and emphasis … then it also follows that I is of its nature intimately linguistic as a psychological phenomenon."[1304] Indeed, social constructivism has shown how the sense of self is contingent upon the acquisition of language, the ability to think symbolically, and the "correct use of the first person personal pronoun" which is "plainly a sociopsychological phenomenon."[1305] In other words, one can argue that "I finds its meaning and usefulness by virtue of belonging to a particular theory of self which new members of a culture acquire and use to organize their experience."[1306] Indeed, for Rom Harré, the self is "an organizing theory whose form and content is social in origin."[1307] Self is inferred, rather than directly intuited. Its indexical function "is a quintessentially social act which serves to ground both interpersonal and interpersonal relationships."[1308] By positing that the self is a solid entity, we have thus reified and granted an ontological status to a mere indexical function, a name for a theory we have generated, when in fact:

> There is no autonomous self functioning to organize experience. There is only a theory of "myself as subject of my experience," which organizes beliefs, memories plans … acquired in the course of development, and appropriated from a community which has itself acquired, held and perhaps subtly modified the theory over time.[1309]

[1301] Ibid., 122. As Benson notes, a point of view is always incomplete, because perspectival (Just as for Merleau-Ponty our bodies set us to experience *as present* the sides of the object that not currently visible).
[1302] Ibid., 92.
[1303] Ibid., 93. The similarities with Buddhist thought (in which I is not a fixed central solid entity with properties) are strong here. See also Glover: to be a person is to have a single stream of "I thoughts." Jonathan Glover, *The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity* (London: Penguin, 1989), 61.
[1304] Ibid., 92.
[1305] Rom Harré, *Personal Being: A Theory of Individual Psychology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 77.
[1306] Benson, 94. Also, Peirce's semiotic theory of self, based on the triad of object–sign–interpretant, shows how the self can be thought of as a sign, embedded in a context, formed within a community of interpretation, constituted by and arising from social relations, themselves understood as sign relations. "Self is an extremely complex semiotic system of hierarchically organized habits… an immensely complex sign in the process of perpetual development… also an embodied semiotic process in continual dialogue with itself and with others." It is a being in communication, an embodied social semiotic being, finding its starting point is the public, linguistic world: "The forms of the 'inner' subjective world are dialogic, and the dynamics of those dialogues are intersubjective in origin… the form of a person is the form of a community." Benson, 117; 118.
[1307] Ibid., 123.
[1308] Ibid., 94.
[1309] Ibid., 124.

Therefore, as Benson demonstrates, drawing both on American pragmatism and social constructivism, not only are subjectivity and identity constructed, they can also be modified, depending on the subject's field and object of attention. Indeed, using Wollheim's terminology, Benson contends that a change in "intentionality" creates a change in "subjectivity": that modifications of the content or context of thoughts, of the objects of attention, of the field of experience in which one is centered, will impact the state of the individual.[1310] In this sense, hypnotic change—both in the context of hypnotic induction and of therapeutic change—can be conceived as nothing more than a change in subjectivity caused by a change in intentionality. The argument that Benson makes about the constructed, indexical and malleable self, can therefore be traced in Watzlawick and Ericksonian hypnotherapists' description of the therapeutic power of reframing.

Constructivism and pragmatism thus help shed light on the liberating potential that stems from acknowledging the original indeterminacy of experience, and the idea that "there is no inside and no outside, no objective world facing the subjective, rather, that the subject-object split… does not exist, that the apparent separation of the world into pairs of opposites is constructed by the subject, and that paradox opens the way into autonomy."[1311] This is applicable to literary narratives, whose fictionality reveals the constructed quality of the all worlds. As Currie notes:

> To think about the world as theory … is to think of the world as not constituting a determinate reality independent of us. To think similarly about fictions is to think anti-realistically about them. And that, it seems to me, is the correct way to think about them.[1312]

From a different perspective, these remarks also allow us to propose an extended concept of "realism," which can be redefined in literature as the ability to represent—as in modernist fiction—the fluctuations and limitations of the mind and the impossibility of objectivity. In this sense, as Terence Doody notes, "realism achieves its objectivity by recognizing the inviolable subjectivity of all its human characters, the potentially equal value and authority of every individual, the possibility of another point of view."[1313] As Furst points out:

[1310] See Wollheim, *The Thread of Life*, 42-43.
[1311] Fransisco Varela, "Epilogue," in *The Invented Reality, The Invented Reality,* ed. P. Watzlawick (New York and London: Norton & Company, 1984), 330.
[1312] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 106.
[1313] Terence Doody, "*Don Quixote, Ulysses,* and the Idea of Realism," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1979): 201. We will examine the question of the therapeutic and ethical dimension of the novel in Chapter 4.

> With the increasing refinement of narrative strategies from Flaubert onward, the narrator's optic, so dominant in Balzac, tends to recede and to yield to the protagonist's vision. As a result, the realist novel's much vaunted objectivity is permeated with subjective apprehensions, which throw into question this traditional dichotomization into opposing pairs.[1314]

Precisely, is in part this representation of multiple and limited perspectives that grants the novel its "air of reality" (as Henry James puts it). In this sense, modernists like Joyce and Woolf are "the consummate realists" as they explore the reality of the human psyche and its relation to the world.[1315]

The 'loss of authority' of the narratorial discourse and mingling of voices which occurs in the novel's shift from realist to modernist aesthetics is a process which mirrors the movement in the history of hypnosis. Just as realist fiction allows easy transitions or relocation from mind to mind,[1316] modern hypnosis allows the subject to move back and forth between different perspectives in time, space, or change characters, which allows for the creation of new narratives and new beliefs to emerge. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 1, during the twentieth century, hypnosis saw an increase in adaptation of the operator to the perspective of the subject, which in Ericksonian hypnosis merge together as they would in a stream of consciousness novel.

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As I hope to have shown in this first section, hypnotic and literary utterances are comparable "illusions"—or apparently "nonserious" forms of discourse—which nevertheless create observable effects and elicit "real" responses in the recipient. As we saw, their "fictional" or "hypnotic" dimension is in great part dependent on the performance of the subject, whose active participation is necessary to constitute the meaning of a hypnotic-novelistic "text." Both novels and hypnotic suggestions are "illusions" in the sense that they create something out of nothing,

[1314] Furst, 117.
[1315] Ibid., 118.
[1316] See Cohn, *Transparent Minds* and Auerbach, *Mimesis:* For Auerbach, modernism is "realistic" in that it produces "a natural and even, if you will, a naturalistic rendering of those processes" of "the continuous rumination of consciousness" in their "peculiar freedom." Auerbach, 538. Also, there is "no viewpoint at all outside the novel from which the people and events within it are 'observed, any more than ·there seems to be an objective reality apart from what is in the consciousness of the characters." Ibid., 534.

produce truth out of falsity.[1317] Both can be considered as forms of serious play, where the recipient intentionally and temporarily lets him or herself be "tricked" by the illusion.

As we saw, this "trickery" occurs on two main levels. First of all, it comes in to play on the level of the aesthetic illusion: in order to be felicitous, realistic fiction and hypnotic discourse tend to hide their artificial dimension. Just as for almost two centuries hypnosis hid the subject's performance under the "supreme fiction" of the operator's power, [1318] novelistic prose, "insofar as it claims the reality of its reference world," also "implies its own denial as fiction."[1319] As Furst argues, the realists' claim of truthfulness is a "decoy," serving to distract the reader away from "the artistic processes involved in the weaving of the textual web," cultivating a style that will "*seem* transparent."[1320] In other terms, in realism, "*poiesis* is … masked as mimesis."[1321] Furst's claim also applies to hypnosis, which "has its own conventions, of which the major one is the concealment of those very conventions in a pretense of simplicity."[1322] However, "even while pretending to believe," both readers and hypnotic subjects "maintain an awareness, on another level, that they are engaging in a pretense of belief."[1323] In both cases, the recipient's heteronomy (his or her ability to be "tricked or "duped") can be considered as—temporary and voluntary—role, as an essential part of the game of make-believe.

In addition to concealing their artificial nature, literary works and hypnosis also "trick" us by violating the conventions that govern ordinary communication, as they both "tolerate and relish linguistic deviance."[1324] Both hypnotic and novelistic forms of discourse are saturated with suggestive or implicit meaning which overflows from the explicit content of their propositions.[1325]

[1317] See also: "The *Sosein* of an Object is not affected by its *Nichtsein* (non-existence)." Meinong, "The Theory of Objects," 86, quoted in Furst, 39.
[1318] See Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality,* 108.
[1319] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 126.
[1320] Furst, 189-190, emphasis added.
[1321] Furst, Ibid, 190.
[1322] Ibid.
[1323] Ibid., 34.
[1324] Pratt, Ibid., 199.
[1325] As Pratt notes, "the coherence of any conversation, text, or extended utterance almost invariably depends a great deal on implicatures"–i.e. the calculations by which we make sense of what we hear, since what a speaker implies is not always equivalent to what he says. (For example, causal and chronological sequences are often established by implicature: the term "and" is often interpreted as "and because of that," a process which is frequently used by hypnotists, who present contiguous utterances as having causal relations when they are merely juxtaposed). For her, the reader comes to the novel with a certain set of expectations, with a predefined idea of the "nature of the [literary] communication situation" and are "required to decode what the author is implying" on the level of the narrative discourse, which is not interpreted literally as it would in an ordinary speech situation : readers "decode the work according to the assumptions unless they are overtly invited or required to do otherwise." For her, literature can still be said to follow Grice's concepts of Cooperative principle and Conversational implicature despite the apparent

When we read fiction or walk into the hypnotist's office we *expect* the text to not always mean what it says, and to use "the full range of nonliteral devices: metaphors metonymy, irony, understatement."[1326] In both cases, violations of ordinary rules—such as Grice's conversational maxims, which govern "any cooperative, rational human activity"[1327]-—are carried out frequently and intentionally, with the recipient being not only aware of it, but also willing to playfully cooperate with the process.

Therefore, novelistic-hypnotic illusions and "trickery" should not be reduced to mere deception. Rather, both combine trickery together with sincerity, in a single experience. As Pratt argues, for instance, literary discourse operates on two levels (narratorial and authorial), and only the former involves deceptive "trickery." Similarly, in hypnosis, only the narrow, specific (sometimes even intentionally incomprehensible) content of the operator's utterances involves deception, while the broader, implied message of the hypnotist (which contains the "hidden" meanings of suggestive language, therapeutic strategy, nonverbal cues, and "metacognitive" levels of communication, analog to the "authorial level" of literary texts) remains "sincere."[1328] As with literature, while the former can trick us and violate conversational maxims, the latter is bound by ethical, therapeutic and communicative maxims and considerations.[1329]

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multitude of violations which occur in literary texts: "given the definition of a story and the assumption that the Cooperative Principle is in force," when reading literature, "we calculate countless implicatures in our dealing with narrators," judging them on the background of what it would be to narrate in good faith. Indeed, Pratt argues that violations happen only on the level of the narrator's discourse, whereas authorial discourse always respect the cooperative principle : "intentional failure to fulfil a maxim in literature always counts as flouting," that is, "blatantly failing" to fulfill the maxim without attempting to mislead or opt out of the communication situation, which "is always resolved by implicature." As Pratt notes about the readers: "Challenging novels or anti-novels such as *Finnegans Wake*, Beckett's *Trilogy* or the Nouveau Roman, can thus be explained as displaying a "radical increase in the number and difficulty of implicatures required to make sense of the given text" sometimes creating "complete narrative and evaluative paralysis" as in Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie*." Pratt, 155; 2014, 211; 158; 163; 211. Globally, flouting through the narrator's violations however does not endanger the Cooperative principle: it is the only kind of "nonfulfillment" possible in and specific to the literary speech situation.

[1326] Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, 28. We assume that the narrative is "the product of an intention agent, whose meaning in making a certain utterance may be different from the literal meaning of the utterance." Ibid.

[1327] Which are divided into the maxims 1. of manner (be perspicuous, avoid obscurity of expression, and ambiguity, be brief, be orderly," 2. of relation (be relevant), 3. of quality (make your contribution one that is true, do not say what you believe to be false, or that for which you lack adequate evidence), 4. of quantity (make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange), do not make it more informative than required)

[1328] For Pratt, the reader must assume that regardless of what the fictional speaker is doing, "the author is observing the Cooperative Principle as defined for display texts and must calculate all the implicatures necessary to maintain this assumption." When a fictional speaker fails to maintain a maxim, usually "the author is implicating things in addition to what the fictional speaker is saying or implicating." In both literature and hypnosis, the narrator-speaker thus "produces a lack of consensus" (between him and the reader), "and the author implicates that this lack of consensus is part of what he is displaying, part of what he wants us to experience, evaluate, and interpret." Ibid., 199.

[1329] A lot of the power attributed to hypnotic discourse lies precisely in this gap between what is said and implied, or what is heard and what is taken to have been be meant – the skilled operator will vary the degree of distance between

In other words, illusion and trickery are part of the novelistic or hypnotic contract.[1330] "In order to cooperate," the reader-subject must thus "interpret the violation as being in accord with the 'accepted purpose or direction of the exchange' in which he and the author [or operator] are engaged."[1331] As we will see in what follows, this explains why modern hypnotic discourse, like modernist or postmodern fiction, can adopt a playful form which openly displays the "violations" which it carries out, and use them strategically for therapeutic or inductive purposes.[1332] In literature and hypnosis, non-cooperativeness can be taken lightly, due to the "bracketing" of ordinary speech-situations and contexts, which invites us confront the text in a specifically literary, that is, non-literal way.

Therefore, rather than merely deceive us, hypnosis and the novel use illusion or "trickery" to prompt their recipient to engage in complex activities of meaning-making and make-believe. In this very process, they are able to communicate or convey certain kinds of truths—whether narrative or therapeutic—pertaining to reality and its constructed dimension. [1333] This is what allows us to argue, with Iser, that "fiction is a lie in terms of given reality; but it gives insight into the reality it simulates, if one defines it in terms of its function namely, to communicate."[1334]

In the next sections of this chapter, I will explore the formal similarities shared by hypnotic and literary discourse, underlining the hypnotic dimension of literary discourse and the literary dimension of hypnotic discourse.

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both levels. This distinction between two levels of "speaking" in a single utterance also saves hypnotic discourse from being nonsensical: although it may occasionally seem incomprehensible to conscious awareness, all violations are implicitly to be considered as voluntary–the listener assumes there is another, inaccessible sense to be heard and "understood" by the unconscious addressee. As Walton notes, "What readers 'know' is ambiguous… between what they 'know' qua participants in their games of make-believe and what they know qua observers of a fictional world (the work world or the world of our games), between what is fictional that they know and what they know to be fictional." Walton, *Mimesis as Make-believe,* 270.

[1330] From another perspective, if all communication is indeed suggestion, "you cannot *not* affect another person's behavior … all behavior is manipulation." Gilligan, "Ericksonian Approaches," 102. Hypnosis, rather than being a deceptive art of influence, therefore merely *makes explicit* the ways in which we are constantly influencing each other.

[1331] Pratt, 198-199.

[1332] As Pratt notes, "it is possible for the fictional speaker of a work of literature to fail to fulfill the Cooperative Principle and maxims in at least the following ways: opting out [i.e. indicating that he is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires], clash, unintentional failure, violation and flouting….In all such cases the fictional speaker's failures count as flouting on the part of the author"—i.e. "authors can mimetically represent all kinds of nonfulfillment, for what counts as a lie, a clash, an opting out of an unintentional failure on the part of the fictional speaker (or writer) counts as flouting on the part of the real-world author and involves an implicature that *the nonfulfillment is in accord with the purpose of the exchange in which the reader and author are engaged."* Pratt, 198; 174, emphasis added.

[1333] In 1979, at a conference of the École Freudienne de Paris, Lacan also notes that the curative power of speech, of the 'operation of the signifier,' is a "question of *truquage*." In Borch-Jacobsen, "Talking Cure," 33.

[1334] Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 181.

3.2. The Hypnotic Dimension of Literary Discourse

3.2.1. Absorptive Reading and The Aesthetic Illusion

3.2.1.1. Novelistic Absorption and its Dangers

One of the main similarities between hypnosis and the novel is their tendency to create absorption in their recipient.

As Yi-Ping Ong points out in *The Art of Being*, critics of the novel have historically been "more concerned with the dangers of absorption and not theatricality."[1335] The major objection against novelistic absorption is its "alleged incompatibility of the experience with the exercise of critical faculties."[1336] Indeed, Emma Bovary, Gerty McDowell, Don Quixote have all fallen prey to fiction's suggestive and "dangerous" power to alter the reader's mind. Fears surrounding novelistic absorption were especially present in nineteenth-century medical discourse, according to which novel reading supposedly encouraged reverie, automatism, moral corruption and physiological "degeneration." [1337] Such fears were especially manifested in regard to more "vulnerable" subjects, who were taken to be more suggestible than other, more self-possessed and rational—mostly male—readers.[1338]

For instance, in *The Woman Reader*, Kate Flint shows how novels consistently figured among the stimuli it was considered advisable for Victorian women to avoid.[1339] As Martyn Lyons

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[1335] Ong, *The Art of Being,* 7.

[1336] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 10.

[1337] The moral condemnation of novels insisted on "standard tropes of succumbing to erotic desire, empathetic identification and self-aestheticization" and lasted well into the twentieth century. Ong, 3. See for example: excessive novel reading is "a sign of vice." Queenie D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932; London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 50. As for the physiological dangers of reading, most were based on concerns centered around the excessive nervous sensibility of the subject. Victorian observers feared that as reading became more and more passive, "the eye would remain active, but the nerve that connected it with the brain would simply wither away from disuse." See R. D. Atlick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), 370.

[1338] For nineteenth-century publishers, "the woman reader was above all a consumer of novels. … Although women were not the only readers of novels, they were regarded as a prime target for popular and romantic fiction. The feminization of the novel-reader seemed to confirm dominant preconceptions about the female's role and her intelligence." As the "antithesis of practical and instructive literature," novels, "dealing with the inner life, were part of the private sphere to which the nineteenth-century bourgeois women were relegated." Lyons, "New Readers in the nineteenth Century," in Cavallo and Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West,* 319.

[1339] Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 60. The Baudelairian figure of the "hysterical" poet—and its "feminine" aspects—can thus be considered as an aesthetic reappropriation and

shows, novel-reading thus also indirectly carried a certain danger for the nineteenth-century bourgeois husband and *paterfamilias:*

> The novel could excite the passions, and stimulate the female imagination. It would encourage romantic expectations … make erotic suggestions that threatened chastity and good order. The nineteenth-century novel was thus associated with the (supposedly) female qualities of irrationality and emotional vulnerability.[1340]

Nineteenth-century medical texts also emphasized the dangers of novel reading for the child's malleable mind. In *Diseases of the Nervous System* (1855) for example, A.B. Carter writes:

> It will be difficult to find a better illustration of complete automatic attention than is constantly furnished by a child with a novel; and this attention, interfering, as it does, with a volitional fixing of the thoughts, is not at all to be desired. The strong emotions too, which, in a susceptible mind, may be called forth by fiction, and, especially, by accounts of situations to which the events of daily life afford no parallel, are often hurtful; and good novels may serve only to excite a craving, which, with an immature judgment, bad ones will be sufficient to satisfy.[1341]

As in Janet's conception of hypnosis as pathological automatism and monoideism, novel reading is considered as an activity which inhibits the "healthy" exercise of rational, cognitive and volitional capacities. In suggestible subjects, novel reading may thus exacerbate dangerously intense affective reactions or desires, possibly leading to moral dissolution or to the abnegation of one's responsibilities towards others.[1342] As Flint observes, by the mid nineteenth-century, the trope of fiction as a fast route to corruption became so familiar that it was present in novels themselves, both in "dramatic scenarios" used to illustrate the dangers of over-absorption, escapism, and erotic misbehavior, and as a way of "encouraging the reader to think critically about her own practices when consuming novels."[1343] Hypnosis and the novel were both linked to hysteria and condemned for both physiological reasons (reading leads to nervous exhaustion) as well as moral ones (reading encourages escapism, corruption, and delusion).

The "Madam Bovary problem" (as Felski calls is)—the fear that "credulous persons," having their reason "befuddled" and their senses "bewitched," might "lose all ability to distinguish

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transformation of these anxieties. See Kayoko Kashiwagi, "Emma Bovary: parfaite hystérique ou 'poète hystérique'?" In *Madame Bovary et les savoirs* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2009).

[1339] Lyons, New Readers in the nineteenth Century," 319

[1340] Lyons, New Readers in the nineteenth Century," 319.

[1341] A. B. Carter, *On the Influence of Education and Training in Preventing the Diseases of the Nervous System* (London: John Churchill, New Burlington Street, 1855), 429.

[1342] Condemnations of mass reading, rooted in class inequality and prejudice, were also frequent. See for example Coleridge, who describes the majority of the public as engaging not in reading but in a "beggarly day-dreaming, during which the mind of the reader furnishes for itself nothing but laziness, and a little mawkish sensibility." Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in Atlick, 369.

[1343] Flint, *The Woman Reader,* 263-266.

between the real and imagined world"[1344]—is thus at the core of anxieties which bring hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity together. Both are taken to create absorptive experiences that are so strong that "all pretense of aesthetic distance" is completely "wiped out."[1345] In these "conventional accounts of what it means to read a novel," the fear of ontological confusion, and of the moral dangers stemming from it, are similar to those usually associated with hypnotism.[1346]

However, once the twentieth century declared the "death" of both author and hypnotist, novelistic and hypnotic absorption were stripped of their pathological connotations, and their "creators" of their authority.[1347] From this standpoint, in what follows, I will discuss the similarities that remain between both fields once the traditional question of their supposed dangers for the rational subject is set aside. What might be the other "hypnotic" aspects of novel reading, beyond classic tropes of pathology and delusion? In other words, which commonalities do hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity share once the distinction between illusion and delusion is clarified and both fields are stripped of their mythologization?[1348] Before examining the various "hypnotic" metaphors used in literary theory to express the immersive quality of narrative literature, I will first turn to an example of non-pathological readerly absorption, to distinguish aesthetic immersive experiences from common tropes of "dangerous" absorptive dissolution and loss of self.

3.2.1.2. An Example of Non-Pathological Absorptive Reading: Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*

As we will see in this chapter, like hypnosis, the novel creates worlds out of words, producing an impression of truth through a "trickery" of sorts, an aesthetic illusion. By constructing fictional worlds, the novel simultaneously reveals and performs its own power, indicating the paradoxical nature of its ontology: it is simultaneously true and false, and creates worlds that seem "real," both *because* and *in spite of* their falsity.[1349]

[1344] Felski, *Uses of Literature,*74.
[1345] Ibid., 53.
[1346] Ong, 3.
[1347] See Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Aspen: The Magazine in a Box 5+6.* 1967; and J. Zeig (ed.). *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1982).
[1348] One might argue that such a demythologization or demystification depends on the modern subject's capacity to acknowledge and reconnect with the innocuous, beneficial and instructive dimensions of enchantment, which for Felski needs to be "acknowledged as part of modernity rather than antithetical to modernity" if it is to become "a plausible concept for literary and cultural theory." Felski, 67.
[1349] See also: Realism "rests on making tacit what, if brought out into the open and critically examined, might cause the whole theoretical edifice to collapse." Christopher Prendergast, *The Order of Mimesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26.

Although the realist novel can serve as "prototype" for illusionist texts, all illusionist texts are not realistic.[1350] Readerly immersion, strictly speaking, require neither mimesis nor character identification to occur.[1351] In this sense, modernist texts, science-fiction novels and fairy tales can be just as immersive—each in their own way—as nineteenth-century realist novels. Although most experience of readerly absorption involve immersion in a narrative world, one can also find oneself absorbed by a text as a whole, by its voice or atmosphere, and even by the form of the text itself. Readerly immersion can also occur in texts that incorporate aesthetic distance, and even meta-narrative allusions or intrusions, like those frequently seen in eighteenth-century or postmodern fiction. Therefore, while realism is the genre that can seem most fitted to illustrate the workings of the aesthetic illusion, the reader's sense of being immersed in a fictional universe, ultimately, is "independent of the verisimilitude of the textual world."[1352]

Although in the next sections of this Chapter I will focus more specifically on realist aesthetics, first, I will undertake a close reading of excerpts from Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse,* a modernist—yet immersive—text which, in its representation of the hypnotic dimension of the act of reading, provides a striking illustration of how representations of absorption need not always be realistic, and are in themselves, highly absorptive. As I will show, Woolf's text uses the representation of the fictional characters' absorption to work-through its own relation to the dynamics of immersion and distance, which are at the heart of novelistic representation. In the excerpts I will examine, Woolf introduces the hypnotic power of language in the context of a scene of bedtime storytelling, and in one of reading in the bedroom.[1353] In both passages, hypnosis and novelistic absorption come together, not as manifestations of a pathological loss of self, but rather, as forms of immersive, sometimes rapturous experience, that share similar aesthetic and ethical value, and reveal the ways of *looking at the world* that are found in both hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity.

Bedtime Hypnosis

[1350] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 337.
[1351] In fact, as Ong notes, the "immersive spell that the realist novel casts upon its readers relies not only upon its representation of character life, but also on its capacity to engulf her entirely, within the wholeness and intricacy or another world." Ong, 154. This process can occur in non-realist texts, with the immersion into a non-realist world.
[1352] Ryan, *Narrative*, 130. Similarly, in hypnosis, the subject becomes intensely absorbed into imaginary universes that often bear little resemblance to everyday, ordinary life.
[1353] The metaphorical association between sleep (bed), hypnosis and absorption, here goes without saying.

As a text which itself thematizes the relations between solidity and dissolution, eternity and transience on both aesthetic and existential levels, *To The Lighthouse,* introduces hypnosis in descriptions of fleeting shimmering moments of beauty, as they reveal themselves to human consciousness. In a description of the "silver light" dancing on the bedroom floor, for example, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay watch "with fascination, hypnotized," as the perceptual experience creates feelings of "exquisite happiness" and a burst of "ecstasy"—"waves of pure delight" that culminates in the recognition of the completeness of the world, with the thought that "it is enough! It is enough."[1354] Hypnotic-absorptive ways of looking at the world are thus linked to a sense of being struck by a sense of aesthetic completion or perfection.

In Woolf's novel, aesthetic absorption is also linked to the trance-inducing power of evocative and rhythmic language, and a sensitivity to the beauty of shared hypnotic reverie. In a passage where Mrs. Ramsay puts Cam to sleep, for example, the strong bond between mother and child recalls the intimacy of hypnotic *rapport*, as Mrs. Ramsay gently leads the child to imaginatively explore a dream landscape, an oneiric world populated with natural creatures. As the mother lulls the child to sleep with her evocative words, these take on a world-creating, hypnotic power of their own, materializing and flowing almost automatically, in a selfless stream: [1355]

> She could see the words echoing as she spoke them rhythmically in Cam's mind, and Cam was repeating after her how it was like a mountain, a bird's nest, a garden, and there were little antelopes, and her eyes were opening and shutting, and Mrs. Ramsay went on speaking still more monotonously and more rhythmically and more nonsensically, how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots and antelopes and gardens, and everything lovely, she said, raising her head and speaking more and more mechanically, until she sat upright and saw that Cam was asleep.[1356]

Here, the "nonsensical" dimension of Mrs. Ramsay's words matches the "irrational" patterns of association found in primary process thinking and unconscious material, which are occur both in the manifest content of dreams and in hypnotic imagery. Their form, on the other hand, is lulling and monotonous, like the tone of the hypnotic operator in traditional hypnotic inductions.[1357] A

[1354] Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse* (1927; New York and London: Harcourt Brace & Co, 1981), 65.

[1355] Not unlike Vautrin's "maternal" and hypnotic lullaby in *Le Pére Goriot,* which resembles the Abbé Faria's induction method, described in Chapter 1. See Balzac: "il le baisa chaleureusement au front, en chantant: *Dormez,* mes chères amours!/ Pour vous je veillerai toujours." (He placed a wam kiff on his forehead and sng: *Go to sleep,* my dears!/I will always watch over you") Balzac, *Le Pére Goriot,* ed. Philippe Berthier (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 243, emphasis added.

[1356] Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, 115.

[1357] Indeed, many modern hypnotic inductions no longer rely on the "lulling" dimension of monotonous speech, nut on the contrary, introduce rhythmical variations and play on tonal inflection in order to create dynamic and contrasting effects. See also the description of Vautrin's berceuse in Balzac, evoked in Chapter 2.

relation of synchronization or mirroring also takes place, as the child "repeats the words back" to the mother, and both descriptions seem to merge into a single, shared, imagined, and absorptive experience. Absorption here appears in the context of a co-created, ephemeral dream-world, where the child's imagination is set free yet contained in the "holding" environment of maternal care, which matches descriptions of the hypnotic relation found in the work of Erika Fromm, for instance.[1358] After this initial introduction of the dream-inducing power of hypnotic evocation, the dreamlike flight of the birds and the garden, then reappear in the next chapter, when Mrs. Ramsay goes into a reading-induced trance of her own.

Reading in the Bedroom

Chapter XIX presents a scene of the married couple reading in the bedroom. Unlike the shared absorption occurring with Cam's bedtime story, however, here each adult experiences their own, private immersion, as Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay read in silence, side by side. The scene alternates between exterior descriptions of both protagonists' readerly immersion, and internal focalized descriptions of their inner state, including the limited perspectives and projections that color their own interpretations of the experience of the other.

In this passage, Woolf's text constructs a sharp contrast between two kinds of "readerly trance," not only between different texts, but also between two literary genres. Indeed, while Mr. Ramsay is absorbed in a novel by Sir Walter Scott, Mrs. Ramsay reads a collection of poetry, where one finds "Luriana Lurilee" by Charles Isaac Elton, "A Siren's Song" by William Browne, and one of Shakespeare's Sonnets.[1359]

As this passage shows, by describing opposed modes of readerly absorption, Woolf's novel ironically invites its reader to rise, both esthetically and ethically, above Mr. Ramsay's "self-absorbed absorption." However, rather than *genre*-based (which is to say, stemming from the difference between novelistic and poetic absorption), the difference between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's modes of absorption might be due to differences in sensibility and character. By

[1358] See Chapter 1 and the idea that the hypnotist provides a holding environment for the subject, like the "good" mother.

[1359] Based on Leonard Woolf's 1902 transcript. Mr. Ramsay is reading a passage of *The Antiquary,* (1816), where the son of a fisherman, Steenie Meiklebackit [Woolf misspells the name] drowns in a storm. The passage describes how "deep and how terrible was the agony of a father's sorrow." Walter Scott, 253-54, in Allyson Booth, "Mr. Ramsay, Robert Falcon Scott, and Heroic Death." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 40, No. 4 (December 2007): 143.

describing these two forms of reading, Woolf's novel delineates two opposed modes of esthetic—and ethical—sensibility, and simultaneously emphasizes its own entrancing power by representing the differences between novelistic and poetic absorption, from within the medium of *novelistic* form.

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Although hypnosis is not explicitly mentioned in this scene, the act of reading is described with the vocabulary of hypnotic immersivity, which runs throughout the chapter. Even before the reading scene occurs, "hypnosis" is already indirectly present, as Mrs. Ramsay is knitting and falls in an initial state of absorption, suggested by the association of "stillness," "floating," and "depth," which are common signs of hypnotic trance states ("she grew still like a tree which has been tossing and quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by leaf, into quiet"; "as one passes in diving, now a weed, now a straw, now a bubble … sinking deeper").[1360] In its very form, the text also indirectly adopts a rocking and lulling movement—similar to that with which Mrs. Ramsay put Cam to sleep—by multiplying dyadic or triadic rhythmic patterns, which recall the repetitions occurring in hypnotic inductions: "now, now, now"; "felt, felt"; "something, something"; "deeper and deeper."[1361]

It is from this "hypnotically prepared" context that the words from "Luriana Lurilee" appear in Mrs. Ramsay's mind, which are experienced, as they would be in hypnosis, on the mode of an external entity, a verbal stream, entering into—and altering—the private, inner space of her consciousness. Here again, the words seem to materialize, moving from side to side in the space of the psyche that becomes a quasi-synesthetic, spatialized echo chamber, in which they reverberate both visually and aurally:

> And slowly those words … began washing from *side to side* of her mind *rhythmically,* and as they washed, words, like little shaded lights… lit up in the dark of her mind, and seemed leaving their perches up there to fly *across and across,* or to cry out and be echoed, so she turned and felt on the table beside her for a book.[1362]

[1360] Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, 118.
[1361] Ibid., 118-119. The text's undetermined and ambiguous terms ("something"), combined with the lexical field of depth and the description of eyes closing strongly resembles classic formulations used in Ericksonian inductions. Compare: "There is something I want—something I have come to get, and she fell deeper and deeper without knowing quite what it was, with her eyes closed." Woolf, 119. And the vagueness of Ericksonian suggestions: "Your unconscious mind can listen / to me without your knowledge/ and also deal with *something else* at the same time (Pause)." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities,* 38.
[1362] Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, 119, emphasis added.

Here, poetic language—which is not yet read, but simply recalled—becomes hypnotic, taking on a life of its own, its oscillating movement reminiscent of the back and forth of a pendulum swing.[1363] As the words fly across and "light up" the space of the mind, their "rhythmic" power leads Mrs. Ramsay to mechanically, almost somnambulistically, reach out to grab the book next to her.[1364]

As the act of reading proper begins, readerly attention follows the motion which has just been thematically *suggested* by the poetic and metaphorical content in the preceding lines: Mrs. Ramsay reads "at random"; "swinging herself, zigzagging this way and that"; "climbing backwards, upwards" as if in a flower.[1365] Like what often occurs in the hypnotic experience, proportions and sizes are inverted as big becomes small, while direction is simultaneously reversed, switching from the previous sinking motion, to the present ascension of climbing. As the attention hops to the next line (this time taken from William Browne's "The Siren's Song"), the "winged pines" extend the metaphor of flight, and color the readerly experience by injecting the movement of flight into the reading process itself. The text then confirms this inversion, by crystallizing the metaphor it has been suggesting: Mrs. Ramsay (whose being is here reduced, or identified with, her readerly-awareness) has *become* the bird which perches and flies "from one line to another as from one branch to another."[1366]

As the object of awareness controls and colors the way in which it is apprehended by consciousness (for a poem about flight to transform reading into a kind of flight), the suggestive power of poetry creates an experience which blurs the boundary between subject and object, as described by Benson. The parallel between literature and hypnosis is strengthened by the fact that the swift and swooping motion of reading lines of poetic text is focused on form, rhythm, and

[1363] This swinging, alternating motion is the rhythmic foundation of the poem, and its association with the swooping flight of birds and the sensation of falling asleep permeate the other (uncited) lines of the poem, which color and contaminate the characters' inner associations from afar, in virtue of their mere *virtual* presence. For example, in the last stanza: "Swing, swing on the cedar bough! /Luriana Lurilee/Till you sleep in a bramble-heap." Charles Isaac Elton, "A Garden Song." https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Luriana,_Lurilee.

[1364] Here the automatic dimension of her gesture is further suggested by the causality implied with the conjunction "so." Furthermore, the repetition of "and"—especially in clauses such as "and as they washed"—is highly reminiscent of the flowing chain of loosely related clauses in modern inductions, where continuity is presented as causality (usually repeating several clauses connected with "and," the chain culminating with "so" or "because"). See Erickson: "and that will remain/and when you awaken ... and I want you to be curious about ... because everybody handles the situation differently." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 99. See also the comparison between ratification loops and the passage from *Anna Karenina* discussed further on in this chapter.

[1365] Woolf, 119.

[1366] Ibid.

musicality, on color and aesthetic impression, rather than on content or meaning: "she only knew this is white, or this is red. She did not know what the words meant at all."[1367] Here, the hypnotic dimension of reading is thus intimately linked to the literariness of the text, and to its poetic, rather than referential dimension.

Mr. Ramsay

What of *novelistic* absorption, then?

As husband and wife exchange a silent gaze, the text switches to the description—through Mrs. Ramsay's perspective—of Mr. Ramsay, viewed from the outside as he engages in his own act of absorptive reading, not of poetry but of a novel by Walter Scott.[1368] Here, despite Mrs. Ramsay's attentiveness, there seems to be no communication between husband and wife, as he is in *rapport* with the novel, and not with her—he is temporarily oblivious to her presence.

Hence Mrs. Ramsay is left observing the effect of the "life" and "power" of the novel on her husband, who is so immersed that he seems cut off from his surroundings: he "slaps his thighs," his "lips twitched" as he "went on reading" and seemed to say, "don't interrupt me."[1369] In the description of Mr. Ramsay, the trope of possession is even used, pointing from without to the impression given off by the absorbed subject: "it filled him."[1370]

As the perspective then shifts to Mr. Ramsay's inner experience, it becomes apparent that his absorption is linked to the strong affective response elicited by the events in the fictional world. Mr. Ramsay's emotional reaction, however, cannot be reduced to mere feelings of empathy or compassion for the tragic situation of the protagonists. Indeed, although Mr. Ramsay is crying, his emotional reaction also comprises an "astonishing delight and feeling of vigor."[1371] His reading "made him feel so vigorous so relieved of something that he felt roused and triumphant and could not choke back his tears."[1372] In other words, his tears are inseparable from an intensely pleasurable

[1367] Ibid
[1368] Minds are not transparent here: Mrs. Ramsay can but *infer* his inner life from the observation of her husband's exterior behavior, whom she loves but nevertheless remains separate from.
[1369] Ibid.
[1370] Ibid.
[1371] Ibid., 120.
[1372] Ibid.

experience, which indicates that novelistic absorption, like hypnosis, always contains an element of distance, without which it would not be a properly *aesthetic* experience.[1373]

In fact, for Mr. Ramsay, reading appears as a means of imaginative transportation, away from the dissatisfaction of the everyday. To describe this dimension—which, pushed to its extreme, would lead to the escapism invoked in the context of the "dangers" of novelistic absorption—the text sets up a gradation, from forgetting the smaller concerns and anxieties of the everyday, to forgetting one's whole sense of self: "he clean forgot all the little rubs and digs of the evening," he "forgot his own bothers and failures completely in poor Steenie's drowning," he "forgot himself completely."[1374] As Mr. Ramsay finishes the chapter, the description of novelistic absorption has reached a point of culmination, as his self-forgetfulness is crowned by a moment of amnesia, recalls the post-hypnotic amnesia sometimes experienced by hypnotic subjects: "He must read it again. He could not remember the whole shape of the thing."[1375]

However, Mr. Ramsay is not prey to a complete dissolution of the self. Indeed, despite this moment of forgetting, analytic thought remains operative throughout the experience, as it does in the context of a hypnosis session. Indeed, Mr. Ramsay's absorptive experience does not prevent him in engaging "one or two reflections about morality and French novels and English novels,"[1376] as well as "Scott and Balzac."[1377] Woolf's text thus demonstrates an awareness that immersive experience is not incompatible with reflection. Once absorption is defined as a state of concentration on a given object, temporary self-forgetfulness can occur without complete loss of self. A latent awareness of fictionality and reflective distance can coexist with the intensity of an affectively and imaginatively engaged being in the (fictional) world.

Performing the swinging, back and forth motion with which it opened, the text then shifts to Mr. Ramsay's observation of his wife: "he looked at her reading. She looked very peaceful, reading."[1378] The narrative perspective then completes the movement, by returning to Mrs. Ramsay's own, internal perspective with the use of free indirect discourse, which is permeated

[1373] Indeed, if Mr. Ramsay's tears were out of actual despair for the fate of the characters, he would be oblivious to the fictionality of the events in question: his experience would be one of delusion, not aesthetic illusion.
[1374] Ibid.
[1375] Ibid.
[1376] Ibid.
[1377] Ibid., 121.
[1378] Ibid.

with the previous metaphors and reveals her sleepy reluctance to "awaken" of the absorptive trance state:

> like a person in a light sleep [she] seemed to say that if he wanted her to wake she would, she really would, but otherwise might she go on sleeping, just a little longer, just a little longer? She was climbing up those branches, this way and that… Stuck to this magnet, her mind felt swept, felt clean.[1379]

Here, the appearance of the magnetotrope, the repetition of the child-like request to go on "just a little longer," and the emptiness suggested by the double sense of "swept" (both kinetic and domestic), all participate in suggesting an irresistible movement of being *pulled* into—and maintained in—a pleasant state of contentment, reminiscent of Puységur's magnetic sleep: "how satisfying, how restful."[1380] This peaceful state contrasts with the agitation characteristic of Mr. Ramsay's fast-paced, novelistic enthrallment. The "cleanliness" of Mrs. Ramsay's mind is then linked to the "clarity" of the poetic insight which follows, as she beholds the "essence sucked out of life and held" in the form of the Shakespearean sonnet.[1381] Unlike her husband, who is unable to remember the "whole" of the novel, Mrs. Ramsay is able to contemplate the unity of the sonnet, "suddenly entire."[1382] There seem to be crucial differences, then, between husband and wife's respective modes of being absorbed.

The most notable difference, however, lies less in the difference between poetic and novelistic genres, than in the capacity for attention of each protagonist. Indeed, the conjunction "but" which marks the beginning of a paragraph ("But she was becoming conscious of her husband looking at her"[1383]) marks a rupture, both in the flow of the text and of Mrs. Ramsay's reading trance. Rather than indicate a fragility and weakness in her capacity for attention (or suggesting that her absorption is easily disturbed), it suggests a greater sophistication than the coarse, oblivious, mode of attending of her husband.

Indeed, Mrs. Ramsay's capacity for awareness (of the other) echoes a similar mention on the previous page ("a little sound roused her—her husband slapping his thighs"[1384]), which indicates her ability to tune into the subtle details and cues emanating from others, to interrupt her experience upon noticing the presence, the actions, or needs of others. In comparison, Mr. Ramsay's absorption and desire to not be "interrupted" seems more akin to self-absorption. Like

[1379] Ibid.
[1380] Ibid.
[1381] Ibid.
[1382] Ibid.
[1383] Ibid.
[1384] Ibid., 119.

the hypnotic operator, who must maintain a similar attentiveness to the subject, and like the subject, who maintains a latent awareness of the outside world during the immersive experience, Mrs. Ramsay, on the other hand, is able to be intensely immersed *and* freely move back and forth between absorption and reality-observation.

Rather than noticing the subtle manifestations in others' behavior, Mr. Ramsay even seems to projects his own (insecure) pre—or misconceptions of the female reader onto his wife, reducing her to an object of aesthetic enjoyment:

> he wondered what she was reading, and exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful.[1385]

Reminiscent of the nineteenth-century medical gaze imposed on the hypnotic patient, Mr. Ramsay reduces female absorption to a blank, ignorant state of mindless immersion, and his wife's being to a beautiful body which lacks the understanding of the male rational subject—when it is he who lacks a concept of selfless understanding, and fails to grasp what it means to decode the subtlety of human behavior from within a context of aesthetic enjoyment.

By contrasting two incommensurable modes of absorptive reading, the text stages a confrontation between two opposed forms of attention, which ultimately fail to meet—hence the sense of separation with which the scene comes to a close.[1386] Although at first glance, the duality might seem to oppose the novelistic and the poetic genres, or even the male and female gender, I would suggest that the underlying dichotomy is rather ethical in nature. It opposes two form of absorption: that of self-absorbed, self-reassuring, self-interest on the one hand, and selflessness on the other. As Alysson Booth has noted, while Mr. Ramsay cannot resist using Scott to "make a point about his own work" and "soothe his professional insecurities," Mrs. Ramsay is simply immersed in the experience of beauty while remaining attentive to what lies beyond herself. [1387] Her ability to slip in and out of trance, which is deeper than her husband's, mirrors her ability to notice the needs and existence, the "reality" of others. In other words, expertise in moving in and

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[1385] Ibid., 121.

[1386] Ultimately, Mr. Ramsay's silence is self-absorbed, his body language even seems to mimic or parody the gestures of a nineteenth century hypnotist, as if his own state of obliviousness to the outside (and to his wife) lingered on after he has put down the book, as he remains focused on his own interests: "He was silent, swinging the compass on his watch-chain to and fro, and thinking of Scott's novels and Balzac's novels." On the other hand, Mr. Ramsay's silence seems expectant—an unformulated, nonverbal request which goes unnoticed by her husband: "Say anything, she begged, looking at him, as if for help"; "Will you tell me for once that you love me?" Ibid., 122; 124.

[1387] Booth, "Mr. Ramsay," 143.

out of aesthetic absorption, is an antidote to self-absorption.[1388] In a letter to Ether Smyth, Woolf explicitly emphasizes the parallel between the magnetic power of reading and its ethical implications, by using the analogy with hypnosis:

> I think heaven must be one continuous unexhausting reading. It's *a disembodied trance-like intense rapture* that used to seize me as a girl, and comes back now and again down here with a violence that lays me low… the state of reading consists in the complete elimination of the ego; and it's the ego that erects itself like another part of the body I don't dare to name.[1389]

Through contrasted descriptions of the phenomenology of reading, the novel is therefore able to lay out various possible responses to aesthetic objects, and sketch out their ethical implications. Literary absorption seems associated with sensitivity and deep attention, payed both to the beauty of language and to others. Needless to say that if Woolf's text is able to represent both and incorporate the aesthetic, hypnotic and ethical powers of poetic language into the novelistic prose, the absorption created by the modernist novel reaches beyond the mere "immersive" effects of character identification and referential illusions, incorporating aesthetic distance and ethical considerations into a readerly experience similar to modern hypnotic states. By representing various forms of readerly absorption through the medium of novelistic prose, it reveals the latent aesthetic distance that is compatible with intense, rapturous immersion. Like hypnosis, the novel can incorporate absorption and reflexivity in a single experience. As in hypnosis, both mimesis and anti-mimesis are present simultaneously.

3.2.1.1. The Aesthetic Illusion. *Celare Artem*

After having examined this example of non-pathological readerly absorption, I will now turn to the theorization of the hypnotic dimension of narrative literature, in its capacity to create strong immersive and "illusory" experiences for the reader. Before examining specific metaphors used by literary critics and theorists to capture this hypnotic dimension in the next section, here, I will briefly establish in which sense both novelistic and hypnotic experiences can be considered as instances of the "aesthetic illusion," rather than mere delusion.

[1388] Chapter 4 will examine this question more in depth.
[1389] Virginia Woolf, Letter to Ether Smyth, 29 July 1934, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. N. Nicolson and J. Trautmann (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 319, emphasis added.

Werner Wolf argues that "delusionary" states differ from the aesthetic illusion in that they are "entered upon involuntarily, and lack the required distance between the experiencer and the fictional world."[1390] In opposition to delusion, he defines the aesthetic illusion as:

> an impression of variable intensity, of being imaginatively immersed in a possible world that is constituted, or referred to, by the artefact, and of experiencing this world in a mainly sensory (visual) and emotional way as if it were a slice of life. In spite of a dominant and willed feeling of experiential immersion, aesthetic illusion, as opposed to delusion, is characterized by a latent rational distance. This distance is a consequence of the culturally acquired awareness of the fictional quality of the artefact (performance) and of the illusionary status of the dominant effect induced by it.[1391]

And:

> a basically pleasurable mental state that emerges during the reception of many representational texts, artifacts or performances. These representations may be fictional or factual, and in particular include narratives. Like all reception effects, aesthetic illusion is elicited by a conjunction of factors that are located (a) in the representations themselves, (b), in the reception process and the recipients and (c) in cultural and historical contexts. Aesthetic illusion consists primarily of a feeling, with variable intensity, of being imaginatively and emotionally immersed in a represented world and of experiencing this world in a way similar (but not identical) to real life. At the same time, however, this impression of immersion is counterbalanced by a latent rational distance resulting from a culturally acquired awareness of the difference between representation and reality.[1392]

Like hypnotic trance, the aesthetic illusions is a spectrum, it is "gradable," according to the degrees of immersion or distance in reception situations and is in this sense, "unstable."[1393] Following Wolf, "agency" and responsibility for the "illusionist" experience is spread between the artistic work/hypnotic experience, the author/operator and the historical context which defines norms for the illusion to take place successfully in either case.

As stated higher up, the best representative of the "hypnotic" power of the aesthetic illusion in the literary field is the nineteenth-century realist novel, whose goal is "making believable the world inhabited by the characters."[1394] As Furst shows, the mimetic and referential ambition of the

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[1390] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 328. These include 1) "a nonexperiential, *referential* illusion (or '*delusion'*)" in the sense of an erroneous attribution of a reality status to something fictional or invented such as *trompe-l'oeil* techniques in the visual arts and 'fictions of authenticity' in literature or 'particularly convincing imitations of factual texts]; and 2) frequently occurring in parallel to, or as a consequence of, such referential delusions, "an *experiential delusion* without distance… the most advanced form of which to date is that of computerized virtual realities." Ibid.

[1391] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 331.

[1392] Wolf, "Illusion (Aesthetic)," in *Handbook of Narratology,* ed. P. Hühn, vol. 1(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 270.

[1393] Wolf, Ibid., quoted in Troscianko, "How Should We Talk About Reading Experience?" in *Aesthetic Illusion,* ed. T. Koblížek (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 270.

[1394] Furst, *All is True*, ix, note added. See for instance: "the illusionist prototype of the past few centuries is the nineteenth-century realist novel," which "has always been accorded a particularly high potential for eliciting illusionist immersion." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 335. See also: immersion in a textual world depends

realist novel can be summed up by Balzac's prefatory framing device, that precedes the description of the Vauquer boarding house in the opening of *Le Père Goriot: "*All is true."[1395]

Indeed, the realist text "is invested with truth through belief in the power of representation, which was thought to reside in the referential force of the word."[1396] By placing the novel under the heading of truth, Balzac breaks with the category of the fictitious that governed the eighteenth-century novel, and attributes to the writer the task of becoming a "more or less faithful painter" of reality.[1397] The task of the fiction-maker thus becomes to *reproduce*: "French society would be the real author; I should be only the secretary."[1398] The function of the novel then becomes that of a mirror, which is to faithfully reflect, copy, or record in narrative form the events and truths of "real life," as the narrative voice becomes inconspicuous.[1399] Indeed, as Lilian Furst notes, this image of the mirror attenuates the fictive status of the text, "masking its existence as a verbal system," and thereby "deny[ing] the discrepancy between language and actuality."[1400] The idea that language can function as a transparent mirror, an innocent eye, or an open window, endowed with a capacity for faithful representation, is indeed crucial to realist esthetics, which can then "ascribe

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on "pretended belief in a solid extratextual reference world" and "looks through the signs toward the reference world." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 132; "The predominant *heteroreferentiality* of realist fiction is actually a consequence of the more general fact that all illusionist artefacts, even those that ultimately play with illusion,… are *representational*: they evoke or "represent" a world that is seemingly outside the artefact, which therefore appears to refer to something other than itself." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 337. Although they "do not totally eschew strategies such as metafictional self-referentiality," realist and illusionist stories are characterized by a "predominance of fictional (hetero)referentiality over self-referentiality. This referentiality can point to possible worlds of outer "reality" (as in realist fiction and in drama) or of inner, psychological "reality" (as in the more "subjective" illusion created by modernist interior monologue or stream-of-consciousness fiction." Wolf, Ibid., 339. The question of the "hypnotic" nature of modernist and postmodern texts will be raised further down.

[1395] Balzac, 2:848. "Ah! Sachez-le: ce drame n'est ni une fiction, ni un roman. All is true, il est véritable, que chacun peut en reconnaître les éléments chez soi dans son coeur peut-être." Balzac, *La Comédie Humaine,* ed. M. Bouteron. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 2:848.

[1396] Furst, *All is True*, 8.

[1397] ("un peintre plus ou moins fidèle") Balzac, Ibid., 1:7. The novel would merely be an "auguste mensonge (a complete lie)"if it were not "vrai dans les détails (true in its details)." Balzac, 1:11.

[1398] Balzac 1:7. As shown in Chapter 1 and our analysis of *Ursule Mirouët,* this portrayal of the Balzacian novel as purely mimetic has been long since questioned: Balzac himself declared that he is writing under the "light of the two eternal truths or Religion and Monarchy," Gautier called him a "visionary," Baudelaire affirmed that "all his stories are colored like dreams" and Gaetan Picon argues that he "struggles against the unknown." See Lubomír Doležel, "*La Comédie Humaine* and the Illusion of Reality," in *Aesthetic Illusion*, 190.

[1399] Furst retraces the history of the metaphor of the novel as mirror in realist fiction: for example, Dickens speaks of it as a "great looking-glass." Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (New York: New American Library, 1980)*,* 24. Stendhal describes realism as "un miroir qu'on promène le long d'un chemin (a mirror that one runs along a path)." Stendhal, epigraph to Chapter 13 of *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Zola uses the image of the eye (which "also reiterates the fallacies of the mirror image, by representing the eye as a passive registering device, a camera of sorts"). Henry James uses the image of the window. Furst argues that the mirror image itself is however "laden with ambiguities" and potential for distortion, and may also connote optical illusion –even in the Latin root *mirare* linking it to "mirage." See Furst, 9.

[1400] Furst, *All is True,* 9.

truthfulness to the 'transparent' reflection produced, assimilating the novel to documentary."[1401] However, as Furst argues, this is but a "wish scenario" that suppresses the differences between mirrors and works of art: rather than describe the actual workings of the novel, the mirror image is but its announced *ambition*, its explicitly formulated *aspiration*, when in fact, it helps to "pass off illusion as truth."[1402] The mirror is thus both the symbol of realism and the incarnation of the mimetic *pretense* that it tries to maintain, acting not as a reflection but as a "prism" in the artist's "evaluating mind."[1403]

Despite the impossibility of pure transparency, the realist novel nevertheless corresponds to a genre whose "mediality" tends to disappear during the act of reading, just as the verbal medium of hypnotic discourse dissolves and lets the experience emerge in the foreground of the subject's mind.[1404] As Felski also notes, immersion and enchantment in fiction can be so strong that "readers are so entirely caught up in what they are reading that the verbal medium is effaced: they no longer perceive or register the words they are scanning, but feel themselves to be fully subsumed with an imagined world."[1405] Indeed, as Ryan puts it, "textual representation behaves in one respect like holographic pictures: *you cannot see the worlds and the signs at the same time*. Readers and spectators must focus beyond the signs to witness the emergence of a three-dimensional life-like reality."[1406] Without taking a stance on the "life-like reality" of novelistic or hypnotic worlds, one can note for now that both hypnotic and novelistic immersion are "reached through a mental activity that must ignore itself in order to reach its goal."[1407]

[1401] Ibid.

[1402] Ibid. As Gombrich notes, "works of art are not mirrors, but they share with mirrors the elusive magic of transformation which is so hard to put into words." Gombrich, 6.

[1403] Furst, Ibid., 9 One can indeed argue that even in the realist or naturalist novel, there is no such thing as pure transparent narration, and one might even consider narrators as subjectivities that could be included in the novel's character space, with their own landscapes of consciousness. Even Zola's naturalism does not imply the systematic use of a distant scientific perspective: it contains variations in the modes of narration, shifts in focal perspectives, disseminated bursts of suggestive or poetic language, as in the descriptions of the colorful dye running in the water in Zola's *L'Assommoir.* See also: "It is legitimate to see the narrator, too, as a kind of filter, through whose consciousness the scene is mediated. The ideal of narratorial impersonality launched by the realists themselves as an integral part of their claim to truthfulness, is exposed for what it is: a mere myth." Furst, 121.

[1404] Victor Nell gives examples of reader responses in which medially disappears as absorption increases. One subject for example describes his experience as follows: "the more interesting it gets, the more you get the feeling you're not reading any more, you're not reading words, you're not reading sentences, it's as if you are completely living inside the situation." Ockert, quoted in Nell, 290.

[1405] Felski, 68.

[1406] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 132, emphasis added.

[1407] Ryan, Ibid., 133. "Any attempt to increase this activity is likely to lead to self-reflexivity, thereby destroying the delicate balance between constructing the textual world and experiencing it as language-independent presence" (ibid). Similarly, during traditional hypnotic inductions the operator limits self-reflexivity as much as possible, to avoid the

The realist novel's tendency to present itself as a text with an inconspicuous narrative discourse, to eliminate metanarrative allusions, and downplay its fictionality and textuality, all resemble the technique of the hypnotists, who must "cover their tracks" and disguise the illusionist nature of the experience for it to succeed.[1408] In this sense, Furst's contention that realism's "success in covering its own tracks and concealing its artifices" has ironically led it to be mistaken for an "artless form," can just as well be applied to hypnosis.[1409]

As they both "avoid highlighting the mediacy or fictionality of the artefact,"[1410] hypnosis and realist novels thus follow the *Celare artem* principle—which simultaneously conceals *and* confirms their artificial dimension, while minimizing aesthetic distance.[1411] Indeed, both hide the fact that within the medium of language, the artist has no choice but to "select, to combine, to shape the material, in short, *to* create rather than to copy."[1412] Like the absorptive painter, who as Michael Fried has shown, must draw attention away from the fact that the painting is being "beheld," as Furst argues, the novel must conceal "its writerly inner organization beneath a surface

risk of the subject coming "out of trance" due to either external or internal (e.g. emotional), disturbance. Highly analytic subjects are thus often thought to be less "receptive" to hypnosis when one might argue that the difficulty is merely due to self-reflexive awareness being more prominent than the desire for immersion, not unlike a reader who has trouble "getting into" a book. In any case, Ryan defines the "virtual reality effect" as "the denial of the role of signs (bits, pixels, and binary codes) in the production of what the user experiences as unmediated presence" – which can be applied to the verbal medium of both novelistic and hypnotic discourse. Ryan, Ibid., 113.

[1408] It "conceals fictionality by avoiding paradox-creating devices such as (non-naturalizable) metalepsis and generally by abstaining from overly intrusive metareferential elements that would lay bare the constructedness of the representation." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 40. They also avoid carnivalesque humor, as in *Tristram Shandy*. As described by Bakhtin, Carnivalesque laughter is antagonistic to illusionist immersion for two reasons: "Owing to their tendency to establish a subversive community without hierarchical differences ("familiarization"), carnivalesque topsy-turvy worlds frequently disregard thresholds, including, in comic texts, the threshold between the real and the fictional world (e.g., in metalepses or the parabasis of comedy). Such "impossible" blurrings highlight the fictionality of the comic world and thus create distance from it. Secondly, distance from comic objects is also implied in the very nature of loud laughter, which requires an *anesthésie momentanée du coeur.*" Bergson in Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 336-337. Aesthetic illusion, on the contrary, "has an affinity with emotional involvement, and this in turn correlates with seriousness, as can also be seen in drama. Tragedies tend towards aesthetic illusionism (Aristotle's "catharsis" in fact presupposes it to a large extent), while comedies frequently have a propensity towards the breaking of illusion." Wolf, Ibid., 337.

[1409] Furst, *All is True,* 22.

[1410] Wolf, Ibid., 336.

[1411] *Celare Artem,* the "concealment" of the "artistic" nature of art, refers back to the rhetoric and aesthetics of antiquity, the Renaissance, and the eighteenth century. Wolf notes this formula is used by Dryden in "An Essay of Dramatick Poesie." Wolf, Ibid., 341; 66.

[1412] Furst, Ibid., 5, emphasis added.

of readerliness."[1413] Disguising itself as "nonliterary writing," the realist novel keeps its narratorial discursive level relatively inconspicuous.[1414]

In the same way, the hypnotist avoids drawing attention to his existence as a separate individual, banishing formulations that point to his own conceptual map, belief-system, and physical presence, and removing all signs of personal "style" from his discourse.[1415] Like an impersonal or invisible narrator, he aims to disappear and dissolve into hypnotic discourse itself. As Roustang notes, from the subject's perspective, the hypnotist is nothing but the words which are being uttered, and which often blend together with—or are experienced as—the subject's own thoughts.[1416] This process is reminiscent of descriptions found in the phenomenology of reading: "When I read, "it is not so much that I am thinking [the thoughts in the book] as the thoughts of the other; instead, *as I think them they are mine.*"[1417]

Like hypnosis, the realist paradigm of a "true and faithful copy of reality" demands "an apparently autonomous action emanating from an impersonal, disembodied, imperceptible voice." Like the narrator, the hypnotist "wants to become 'a presence that strives to appear solely as an absence'."[1418] It is this impersonal, present-absent quality that then endows the operator's discourse with the authority and inconspicuousness necessary to create the "hypnotic illusion." As

[1413] As Diderot writes in a letter to Sophie Volland from July 18th, 1762, "Si quand on fait un tableau, on suppose des spectateurs, tout est perdu. Le peintre sort de sa toile, comme l'acteur qui parle au parterre sort de la scène" ("If, when one makes a painting, one supposes beholders, everything is lost"). In Fried, *Absorption,* 147-148; Furst, Ibid., 22.
[1414] David Lodge, *Modes of Modern Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 97. For Wolf, the transparency of illusionist discourse is what "permits the recipient's attention to focus, in a relatively 'easy reception,' on the story rather than on the discourse." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 340. Ryan proposes a similar idea: readers "turn the pages without paying too much attention to the letter of the text: what they want is the plot, the least language-dependent dimension of narrative communication." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 118. This conception of immersion being linked to the reader's focus on plot rather than form will be questioned further on. Furthermore, as Furst has noted, the idea of an absolutely "invisible" or transparent narration (just like that of an absolutely absent or invisible hypnotist) is itself an illusion: "even if it chooses to feign absence as Flaubert's does, it is the cornerstone of the entire fictional edifice." Furst, Ibid., 49. A total absence of the narrator or operator's voice would correspond to the absence of the aesthetic experience altogether.
[1415] Rather than imposed from without by direct suggestions, to be efficacious, hypnotic change must emerge from within the world of the subject, into which the hypnotist enters almost as one enters the world of a novel: by temporarily adopting its facts—the sum of propositions used by the subject to describe it—as true in this world.
[1416] "The person of the operator does not interest [the subject] … as he is reduced to what is being suggested" ("la personne de l'éveilleur ne l'intéresse pas [le sujet] … parce qu'elle est réduite à ce qui est suggéré") Roustang, 59.
[1417] Benson 151, emphasis added. See also Merleau-Ponty: "When we read a text which sits in front of us, if its expression is successful, our thinking does not take place in parallel of the text itself, its words occupy our whole mind, they fulfil our expectations exactly." ("Quand on lit un texte devant nous, si l'expression est réussie, nous n'avons pas une pensée en marge du texte lui-même, les mots occupent tout notre esprit, ils viennent combler exactement notre attente," de sorte que "la fin du discours ou du texte sera la fin d'un enchantement"), our translation.
[1418] Gregory Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth, Verga, Lawrence, Faulkner, Pavese* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 11.

in Flaubert's famous aesthetic theory of impersonality, "the artist must be in his work as God is in creation, invisible and all-powerful; one must sense him everywhere but never see him."[1419] Both the hypnotist and the realist narrator "disappear into the fictional world, ceasing to be an identifiable personality, becoming instead a nobody, dematerialized, unindividualized and non-corporeal." [1420] Significantly, this invisibility allows them to become more "audible" and permeate every corner of the subject's mind.

Nevertheless, although they appear to strive towards an ideal of transparent discourse, by concealing their own artificiality, both modern hypnosis and literature acknowledge that there is no such thing as neutral descriptive language, or an absolutely transparent narrator. Indeed, "the filter of the perceiver necessarily entails a significant modification of the implied ideal of a faithful representation of an independently existent actuality."[1421] In both cases, the narrative voice can recede and be made less conspicuous, but never totally disappear. Even in realist aesthetics, formal signs such as the use of the third person past tense, or descriptive passages all betray the presence of a narrative voice, and thus the impossibility of pure transparent, unmediated experience. Similarly, despite his attempts to "synchronize" and mirror the hypnotic subject, the operator can never fully espouse another's worldview, and must therefore strive towards a goal which is, *de facto,* aspirational.

3.2.2. Hypnotic Metaphors for the Aesthetic Illusion

As we have established so far, hypnosis and novel reading are both forms of aesthetic illusions, that create states of absorption in the subject by concealing—and thus, implicitly, acknowledging—their own mediality and "artificial" nature. In this section, I will examine various metaphors of "immersion" which are used in literary criticism to refer to this illusory process, and all point toward what can be called the "hypnotic" dimension of novel reading.

3.2.2.1. World Creation

[1419] ("L'artiste doit être comme Dieu dans la Création, invisible et tout-puissant, qu'on le sente partout, mais qu'on ne le voie pas"). Flaubert, *Correspondance*, 2: 691.
[1420] Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth,* 22.
[1421] Furst, *All is True*, 4.

In possible worlds theory, "what we take for the world is itself no more nor less than a stipulation couched in a symbol system."[1422] As I will show in this section, literary criticism inspired by possible world theory and phenomenology emphasizes the "world-creating" power of literature, in different ways.[1423] In both cases, however, "the essence of a text with regard to the production of aesthetic illusion is its ability to found worlds" or constitute them.[1424]

More specifically for our purposes, phenomenologically inspired literary theory helps to draw out similarities between Husserl's concept of *epochē*, the experience of reading fiction, and the practice of modern hypnosis. [1425] Indeed, hypnosis and novelistic immersion involve the bracketing of exterior reality, as well as the awareness that this bracketing ends as soon as "ordinary life" resumes its course—whether this means putting down a novel, ending a hypnotherapy session, or returning to the everyday natural attitude. Although hypnotic subjects and novel readers do not fit Husserl's conception of the transcendental subject (due to their empirical, emotional, bodily, social, and even political dimensions), the hypnotic-novelistic experience gives rise to worlds that exist only insofar as they are posited by a subject.[1426] For instance, as Roman Ingarden argues, in novel reading: "a whole world is created with variously determined elements and the changes taking place in them, as the purely intentional correlate of a

[1422] Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 105. "What we call a world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world… none is ontologically privileged as the unique world." Bruner, Ibid., 96.

[1423] For criticism inspired by phenomenology see Iser, Ingarden, Felski, Poulet, Moi, etc. For fiction and Possible World theory, see Eco, Doležel, Ronen, and Pavel: "Actual worlds appear to be undoubtedly real, complete and consistent, while fictional worlds are intrinsically incomplete and inconsistent." Thomas Pavel, *Fictional Worlds,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 74. See also Ryan, for whom the reader must fill in the gaps left open by the incompleteness of fictional worlds : "the reader knows that fictional worlds are incomplete, but when he 'plays the game', when he submerges in a fiction, he pretends to believe that this world is complete," and fills in the gaps, obeying the "principle of minimal departure," that states that "we reconstruct the central world of a textual universe in the same way that we reconstruct the alternate possible worlds of nonfactual statements: as conforming as far as possible to our representations of the Actual World. We will project upon these worlds everything we know about reality, and we will make only the adjustments dictated by the text." Then, "once we become immersed in fiction, the characters become real for us, and the world they live in momentarily takes the place of the actual world" Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1991), 51; 21. This process of filling in the gaps of the possible world with the knowledge of the actual world recalls "trance logic," according to which the subject fills in the gaps left incomplete by the operator but also modifies and transforms his view of posthypnotic reality by rendering "ordinary" information consistent with the operator's suggestion–as does the narrator's cousin in Maupassant's *Horla*.

[1424] Fořt, "Aesthetic Illusion Between the Prague School and Fictional Worlds Theory," 274**.**

[1425] See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: an Introduction to Phenomenology,* trans. D. Cairns. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960).

[1426] This allows both hypnotic and poetic discourse to escape accusations of mystification once it is assumed that there is no objective reality to be driven away from.

sentence complex. If this sentence complex finally constitutes a literary work, then I call the whole stock of interconnected intentions sentence correlates the 'portrayed world' of the work."[1427]

In possible worlds theory, possible worlds are the "products of mental activities such as dreaming, wishing, forming hypotheses, imagining, and writing down the products of the imagination in the forms of fiction."[1428] Literary criticism that draws on this theoretical branch underlines the similarities between the ontological status of fictional and of possible worlds.[1429] Fictional worlds can then be defined as "mental entities based on a specific contract between the author and the reader, which are encoded in fictional texts and are 'brought to life' by the decoding activity of the reader during the act of reading."[1430] As we will see, fictional worlds can be "hypnotically" accessed via several modes, ranging from immersion (which implies a visual, contemplative mode of attention), transportation (which implies an embodied, re-located mode of attention), to possession (which is the most extreme metaphor used to depict novelistic-hypnotic absorption).

3.2.2.2. Immersion

Aesthetic illusions create an immersive feeling of "being *present* in the imaginary world in a 'natural,' unmediated way."[1431] Indeed, as Walton argues, readers often experience fictional worlds on a mode that approaches actuality:

[1427] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art,* trans. R. A. Crowley and K. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 31.

[1428] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 114.

[1429] For Kotátko, "The literary functions of a text of narrative fiction require from the interpreter that she approaches in the *as if* mode, its sentences as records of utterances of an inhabitant of the *actual world*—the narrator who tells us what happened *in this world*... the role of the reader includes the presumption of the narrator's credibility, which can be withdrawn if the latter proves unreliable. The text requires us "more than to register" the utterances: to "imagine the state of affairs " specified by the content of its sentences and "we are supposed to accept these states of affairs, in the *as if* mode, as actual, or … to pretend to believe that they are actual—or to indulge in the illusion that they are actual (i.e. facts about the world). Kotátko, "Fiction, Illusion, Reality and Radical Narration," 197-201. For, Doležel, Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* can be described as a "fictional superworld" whose ontological status is situated between "actual world" and "fictional illusion," sharing features of both. With individual fictional worlds, it shares "its ontological status as a possible world; its being created by a fiction maker." With the actual world, it shares two features "it is open, expanding, and is Balzac's special device for strengthening the illusion of reality. It provides an illusory 'universe of discourse' for all fictional worlds of the cycle. It is a substitute of the historical actual world, which allows Balzac to represent reality according to his 'vision'." Doležel, "*La Comédie Humaine* and the Illusion of Reality."190.

[1430] Fořt, Ibid., 276. It is important to note than in these theories, "Fictional worlds are firmly connected to narratives and narrativity as such," not fictionality. Ibid., 277.

[1431] Wolf, Ibid., 332, emphasis added. Wolf enumerates various factors which contribute to the immersion in a storyworld. Some of these include: Extension: "Illusionist worlds typically have a certain *extension*, because aesthetic

> We don't just experience fictional worlds from without. … True, these worlds are merely fictional, and we are well aware that they are. But from *inside* they seem actual—what fictionally is the case is, fictionally, *really* the case—and our presence in them… gives a sense of intimacy with characters and their other contents.[1432]

Similarly, Wolf stresses the experiential quality of this immersion in fictional worlds: "one does not just watch this world from a distance but has the impression of being present in it and, above all, of experiencing it in a way similar to that in which one experiences life."[1433] In this sense, "aesthetic illusion shares with hallucinations (and also dreams) a vivid impression that can be described as a feeling of being 'immersed in an imaginative possible world'."[1434] Hypnotic and novelistic immersion can both produce an "experience through which a fictional world acquires the presence of an autonomous, *language independent* reality populated with live human beings"

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illusion emerges during a process, the process of transition from normal perception to aesthetic, illusionist reception. If this process is too short, because the text is too brief, immersion will not so easily take place." Complexity: "complexity is a feature that ties in with the general quality of aesthetic illusionism, namely that of recentering the recipient in a possible *world*, whose quality as "world" is enhanced by both extension and complexity… These worlds possess not only a spatial but also—and predominantly—a temporal dimension, as they are organized around a dynamic story which forms their backbone." Accessibility: "an enhanced accessibility facilitates illusionist immersion, and this is why illusionist works tend to lower the threshold of access as much as possible and even "lure" their readers into their worlds. In realism, this tendency shows in the presentation of fictional worlds that generally seem to be an extension of the recipients' real world in terms of spatial, temporal (contemporary), and social settings but also, e.g., in terms of norms, ideals, and epistemological preconceptions about the "readability" of reality. "Strongly illusionist narratives typically do not merely sketch a possible world." The world must be "furnished" with objects "well-known to the reader" (places, events, public persons, institutions, etc.) and show "a tendency towards imitating" the "wealth of details perceived in everyday life … Such descriptions facilitate readerly immersion and frequently create memorable "scenes," which "dovetails with the claim made by cognitive psychologists that stories tend to be imagined as sequences of pictures." Consistency: "illusionist worlds tend to be informed, at least in fundamental, logical and epistemological respects, by rules that are compatible, or identical, with the rules governing real life," are "internally coherent" and "meet basic expectations of meaningfulness that also apply to real- life experience, e.g., concerning the absence of unresolvable contradictions, the consistency of time and place, causality, teleology, the difference between reality and fiction, etc." This does not entail however that the text must be realistic: Wolf explains that consistency operates according to Ryan's "principle of minimal departure" and is a default option: "departures are possible, and can even remain compatible with illusion, provided they are marked and explained or linked, e.g., to generic conventions and thus obtain a secondary kind of plausibility." Respecting the conventions of the medium or genre: "surprising departures from generic conventions would foreground these conventions as such and would therefore shift the reader's attention from the possible world as the center of aesthetic illusion to the conditions of its construction." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 335-341.

[1432] Walton, Mimesis, 273.

[1433] Wolf, Ibid., 327-328.

[1434] Ryan, *Possible Worlds,* 21-22. Ryan nevertheless stresses the as-if dimension involved in experiencing the possible world as actual: "This gesture of recentering involves no illusion, no forgetting of what constitutes the reader's native reality. Non-actual possible worlds can only be regarded as actual through Coleridge's much quoted "willing suspension of disbelief." The reader of a fiction knows that the world displayed by the text is virtual, a product of the author's imagination, but she pretends that there is an independently existing reality serving as referent to the narrator's declarations." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 115.

or "objects."[1435] This involves an imaginative dimension which is absent from other absorptive media such music, chess, or non-fictional texts, such as philosophical ones.[1436]

Indeed, the hypnotic and novelistic imaginations frequently involve "intend[ing] an object as if it really was present'."[1437] This is why in both of these fields, fictional worlds can "appear to have a quasi-sensory quality."[1438] For Ryan, they can even acquire a hallucinatory vividness, as "language must find a way to pull its referents into the theater of the mind, and to coax the imagination into simulating sensory perception."[1439] In this way, "verbal texts can create the equivalent of a multimedia show in our minds by the sheer evocative power of words without the complicated technical means other media would require to produce similar effects; provided we have the gift of transforming words into mental 'images'."[1440]

These accounts, in which the *visuality* of immersion is underlined, seem to equate the act of interpretation with image-creation.[1441] For example, Wolf notes that "owing to the paramount importance of visual perception in most human beings, *visual* 'imagination' … predominate[s],"

[1435] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 15, emphasis added.
[1436] Regarding the increase in visual details in the history of the novel, see for example: "Since the eighteenth century the tendency towards descriptive visualization in illusionist fiction… was supported (and even propelled) by an increasingly visual culture that relied more and more on the empirical, outer appearance of things and produced a growing mass of pictures"; "Although narrative perspective is primarily cognitive, from the later eighteenth century onwards perspective as a pro-illusionist device in fiction has also often included the imitation of visual perspective." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 349; note 12, 348.
[1437] Benson, 102.
[1438] Wolf, Ibid., 329.
[1439] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 122.
[1440] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?"43-44**.**
[1441] The description of novel writing as the process of allowing the reader to *see* is also used in novels: See for example: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel–it is, before all, to make you see." Conrad, Preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (London: Dent, 1974), xxvi; or "You shall see them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward they are there at dinner...You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard." Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 9. For a non-novelistic example, see Ignatius de Loyola's spiritual exercises prescribed to the readers of the bible. See also Aristotle, for whom image making and knowledge are closely linked: Aristotle recommends "simulation" or visualizing for writers of tragedy: "When constructing plots or working them out complete with their linguistic expression, one should as far as possible visualize what is happening. By envisaging things very vividly in this way, as if one were actually present at the events themselves, one can find out what is appropriate, and inconsistencies are least likely to be overlooked." Aristotle, *Poetics,* 8.3, 27. See also the association between the emphasis on visuality and the lexical field of hypnosis. For example: "A text *induces* its interpreter to construct an image, or maybe a set of alternative images. The image the interpreter creates early in the text *guides* his interpretation of successive portions of the text and these in turn *induce* him to enrich or modify that image. While the image-construction and image-revision is going on, the interpreter is also trying to figure out what the creator of the text is doing—what the nature of the communication situation is. And that, too, may have an influence on the image-creating process." Fillmore, 1974, IV, 4, in Pratt.

although "other sensory experiences, in particular aural "imaginings" of voices, noises, and music, can also play a role."[1442] This equivalency can also be found in Iser's description:

> A reality that has no existence of its own can only come into being by way of ideation, and so the structure of the text sets off a sequence of *mental images* which lead to the translating itself into the reader's consciousness. The actual content of these mental images will be colored by the reader's existing stock of experience, which acts as a referential background against which the unfamiliar can be conceived and processed.[1443]

However, as reader-response theory and hypnotherapeutic case studies show, experiencing fictional worlds not always involve mental imagery, and in any case, always mobilizes a variety of sensory modalities, in addition to visual images.[1444]

3.2.2.3. Transportation

This is why the metaphor of transportation captures a second aspect of novelistic absorption more accurately. For the experience to be properly "hypnotic," an element of interactivity must be added to that of immersivity. The spatial metaphor of "transportation" (which is frequently used in hypnotic inductions for its homonymy with the term "trance") involves the imaginative traveling-towards and entering into a fictional world, and presupposes the ability to reorganize one's spatial coordinates in order to localize oneself in the fictional space.[1445] This relocation first and foremost

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[1442] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 329. Imaginative visual perception (including hypnotic hallucination) can be thought of as an "internal" extension of ordinary vision. A similar idea is delineated by Merleau-Ponty, for whom "vision teaches us … that through it we come into contact with the sun and the stars, that we are everywhere all at once, and that even our power to imagine ourselves elsewhere… borrows from vision and employs means we owe to it." Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception,* ed. J. Edie (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 187.

[1443] Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 38.

[1444] Although for Wolf, "most readers of literature should have" this ability, many critics reject the contention that mental imagery is an essential component of reading. For example: "when reading fiction, I typically take in the verbal meaning without much sensual imagining of any sort… There can be absorbed attention without visual imagery… Images may appear more or less irrelevant, an almost shocking addition to the real content of the text." Anders Pettersson, "Skeptical Reflections on the Concept of Aesthetic Illusion," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts,* 292-4. Iser also criticizes Ingarden's idea that "a concretization must produce the object in such a way that it gives at least the illusion of a perception." Iser, 177. For Iser, this illusion is merely "one paradigmatic instance of image-building and is in no way identifiable with the whole process of ideation. The mental image of the old man can be just as concrete without our giving him grey hair." For Iser, "the most that can be said of the indeterminacies is that they may stimulate, but not that they demand completion from, our existing store of knowledge." Ibid., 177. Similarly, a hypnotic hallucination in no way requires to be as vivid as visual perception. A nuanced position would thus take into all the gradations between "seeing" and imagining "without seeing" that are produced by both hypnotic and readerly subjectivity, which can include degrees of vagueness, internal aural perception, conceptual thought, and do not require completely formed visual images.

[1445] A parallel can be drawn with Michael Fried's analysis of Diderot's *Salons* of 1767 and of the 1770s, which contain a "fiction of physically entering the painting." Fried, 118. As he imagines himself in the paintings of Vernet (landscapes) and Robert (ruins), Diderot's descriptions recall the process of the hypnotic subject entering a world and exploring it, imagining himself in it : "je me trouve bien là… j'irai m'asseoir à coté du jeune garçon" ("I actually find

involves an imaginary turning-away, or "departure," from the subject's immediate surroundings. As Gerrig notes, "a defining feature of the experience of virtually all narratives is that readers are transported away from the here and now."[1446] By describing fictional worlds as actual—and using in language the indicative rather than the conditional mod—novels and hypnotic discourse takes the appearance of factuality, and asks its users to "transport themselves in imagination into this foreign world."[1447]

Like hypnotic "susceptibility," the ability to be narratively transported evolves through time and with experience. As Victor Nell argues, although "all readers are capable of performing the cognitive activities that enable them to be transported to narrative worlds … less skilled readers find it harder to become thoroughly immersed."[1448] Similarly, although "trained" hypnotic subjects experience more complex hypnotic phenomena, as Bernheim and Delboeuf argue, this capacity is acquired, rather than innate.[1449] In the same way that every hypnotic experience is unique, each new reading of a text produces a different understanding. Indeed, as Iser notes: "a second reading of a piece of literature often produces a different impression from the first. … The increased information that now overshadows the text provides possibilities of combination that were obscured in the first reading. Familiar occurrences now tend to appear in a new light and seem to be at times corrected, at times enriched… the reader himself produces these innovative readings."[1450]

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myself there… I shall go and sit next to the boy"). In Fried, 121. As Diderot writes, "a painting which puts you in the scene … is never a bad painting." In Fried, 121. Fried however speaks of the "wholly passive receptivity" of the beholder when absorbed in front of the painting, experiencing a form of "enchantment" and suspension of time, a state of "essential reverie," a "repos délicieux," a "particular psychophysical condition" which resembles trance but is never named as such. Fried, 130. Self-forgetfulness is a strong component of this experience: "on s'oublie devant le tableau, c'est là la plus forte magie de l'art" ("One forgets oneself in front of the painting; there lies art's most powerful magic"). In Fried, 127. However, this insistence on passive receptivity neglects the strongly active dimension of the subject who engages in an exploratory *déambulation* or *promenade* in the space of the painting. Indeed, Diderot also uses verbs of movement and future tense to capture the experience: "j'irai m'asseoir" (I shall go and sit), in Fried 121. His depiction thus underlines the imaginative activity that is the counterpart of the passive receptivity of the body before the painting.

[1446] Gerrig, 128. For Gerrig, by addressing readers as "side participants," novels and transport them into the narrative world, and in this process, make certain aspects of the real world inaccessible.

[1447] Ryan, "Fiction, Cognition, and Non-Verbal Media," in M. Grishakova and Ryan, eds. *Intermediality and Storytelling* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 14.

[1448] Nell, in Gerrig, 19.

[1449] See Chapter 1.

[1450] Iser, "The Reading Process, a Phenomenological Approach," *New Literary History* 3, no. 2 (Winter, 1972): 286. One can compare this to Erickson's *presentation* to a subject of her second hypnotic experience as a simplification, a stripping, an undoing (rather than an increase in knowledge): "It is often said,/we learn to skate in the summer/and to swim in the winter./ We achieve certain/level of learning/to skate in the winter./But the next winter/we start skating with a higher degree of excellence/because the random movements off skating/that *complicated the first learning/have*

Upon closer inspection, a *double* movement can be identified in hypnotic-novelistic transportation. As Ryan argues:

> Narrative phenomenology involves not just one but two acts of recentering, one logical and the other imaginative. The first—the constitutive gesture of fictionality—sends the reader from the real world to the nonfactual possible world created by the text; the second, an option available in principle to both fiction and nonfiction… relocates the reader from the periphery to the heart of the story-world and from the time of narration to the time of the narrated.[1451]

Transportation, then, occurs first from the actual to the fictional world, and then, takes place "inside" fictional space and temporality. Because the concept of transportation does not capture in detail the numerous directions in which various aesthetic "relocations" can occur, the concept of aesthetic "recentering" seems more appropriate, as it presupposes a multiplicity of points of "departure" and "arrival" between which the novelistic-hypnotic imagination can navigate.

3.2.2.4. Recentering

Ciarán Benson's theorization of literary absorption as "recentering" is in this sense especially relevant to our purposes. As Benson argues in *The Absorbed Self,* recentering is the process by which we make "ours" another "center of consciousness," whether animate or inanimate.[1452]

According to Benson, subjective experience is composed of "different types of experiential fields" and "different ways for the self to be centered within such fields."[1453] As he argues, although the first person pronoun is the typical "functional center" of symbolic thinking, in numerous acts of perception, it is not always around an "I as centre" that perceptual experience is organized.[1454] Indeed, "there can be a virtual merging or fusing of the subject's perceptual position with the 'that' which is perceived."[1455] While I am absorbed, "it is as though I have been

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dropped out./And the first winter/the random movements/were still fresh in mind (Pause)/Now you can go/much deeper/because / *there are many fewer/random movements/or processes.*" Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 284, emphasis added.

[1451] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 139.

[1452] Benson, 167.

[1453] Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* xi.

[1454] "It is always an I that acts as a functional center for symbolic thoughts." Benson, 101. See also Iser: "As perspectives are continually interweaving and interacting, it is not possible for the reader to embrace all perspectives at once … The structure of theme [the perspectival view in which the reader is involved] and horizon constitutes the vital link between text and reader, because it actively involves the reader in the process of synthesizing an assembly of constantly shifting viewpoints, which not only modify one another but also influence past and future syntheses." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 97.

[1455] Ibid., 101.

temporarily recentred and am where the object of my perception appears to be… the particular object almost entirely and exclusively occupies my field of awareness—its now is my now; but my here somehow becomes its here."[1456] In this kind of perceptual act, the subject is phenomenologically "transported spatially to where the object of intention is … the there and now… can carry the perceptual subject with them, just as the subject as indexical carries the here and now."[1457] For Benson, all forms of aesthetic absorption involve a "transition/transformation of one form of centeredness into another."[1458]

By "altering the context of I" in this way, aesthetic experiences such as reading invite us to "temporarily occupy" other points of view and adopt a new "I perspective":

> Stories may be presented from the perspective of a narrator which a reader may adopt for all or some of the reading of the story. To the extent that one does not deploy one's own perspective but stands in a relationship to the narrative happenings which is the narrator's … the reader's 'I' has occupied that other perspective.[1459]

As I will argue in Chapter 4, recentering is at the heart of the ethical and therapeutic value of hypnotic and novelistic narratives, since "to be aesthetically absorbed in a book of narrative fiction is, in part, to be in the same state of thinking and feeling as that other 'centre of consciousness' in so far as that other centre becomes, for the duration, my centre."[1460]

Furthermore, Ryan describes this process as not merely entering a fictional world, but also reorganizing it around a new center: "in the space-travel mode, represented by fiction and now by VR technology, consciousness relocates itself to another world, *and recenters the universe around this virtual reality.*"[1461] Indeed, constructing a mental representation of a scene involves getting a "general spatial orientation" from the text.[1462] The concept of recentering is thus also strongly linked to the impression of being situated, as a body, in space. Both hypnosis and the novel involve "a sense of being located, localized, of being a significant point of reference for other objects occupying the same space."[1463] This impression of spatial localization is essential to the absorptive

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[1456] Ibid., 99.
[1457] Ibid., 99-100.
[1458] Ibid., xi.
[1459] Ibid., 96.
[1460] Ibid.
[1461] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 115, emphasis added. Ryan even compares the recentering in VR to the hallucinatory centering of shamanic subjectivity: "in the virtual environment, as in certain shamanistic rituals described by Mircea Eliade, the body stands at the center of the world, and the world irradiates from it." Ryan, 72. See also: "Virtual reality "is like having shared hallucinations, except that you can compose them like works of art; you can compose the external world in any way ay all as an act of communication." Zhai, *Get real,* 182, in Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality,* 15.
[1462] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 44.
[1463] Benson, 141.

dimension of the aesthetic experience. Indeed, "if a mind may conceive a world from the outside, a body always experiences it from the inside."[1464] During hypnotic inductions, this dimension is explored in depth with techniques that purposefully explore, deepen, and modify the subject's sense of spatial situatedness and proprioception.

As Ryan describes it, during the process of recentering, the "relocated consciousness" of the reader "grows an imaginary body that takes up residence in the fictional world."[1465]However, with Ryan's description, a notable difference between novelistic and hypnotic worlds appears: whereas the reader cannot modify the environment described by the text, hypnosis—like virtual reality—is both immersive *and* interactive: it allows the subject, not only "to apprehend a world as real" by feeling "surrounded by it, physically with it," but also, gives one "the power to modify this environment."[1466] Although they offer different levels of interactivity, in both hypnosis and the novel, the immersive quality of aesthetic recentering reveals a "sense of being-in-the-world at the core of the theory and poetics of immersion."[1467]

Indeed, to a certain degree, novelistic action also unfolds "in a world where our selves move and experience one another."[1468] Like illusionist paintings, the novel mobilizes "techniques that imitate the perspectivity of everyday experience, that is, the inevitable limitation of perception according to the point of view and horizon of the perceiver," and in this sense, strengthen the sense of spatial localization.[1469] By multiplying descriptive details which "fix an atmosphere," novels

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[1464] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 134. Ryan argues that with Virtual Reality, the user is immersed "in a world experienced as already in place" and therefore that "For the first time in history, the possible worlds created by the mind become palpable entities." Ibid., 114. We would object however that this is already the case in hypnosis. As Merleau-Ponty has shown: "The speaking 'I' abides in its body. Rather than imprisoning it, language is like a magic machine for transporting the 'I' into the other person's perspective… There can be speech (and in the end personality) only for an 'I' which contains the germ of a depersonalization. Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World,* trans. J. O'Neil. (Evanston: Northwestern University press, 1973), 19-20.

[1465] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 116.

[1466] Ibid., 111.

[1467] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 14. See also Merleau-Ponty: "The perceiving mind is an incarnated mind"; we must not "forget … the insertion of the mind in corporeality"; " It is by imagining ourselves physically reaching out to grab x that I acquire a sense of its presence: "We grasp external space though our bodily situation. A 'corporeal or postural schema' gives us at every moment a global, practical and implicit notion of the relation between our bodies and things, of our hold in them. A system of possible movements, or 'motor projects' radiates from us to our environment. Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space." Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics,* trans. J. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 3; 4; 5. See also: "my body… is my point of view upon the world" and constitutes a "general means for having a world." *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans D. Landes (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 73; 147.

[1468] Ralph Freedman, "The Possibility of a Theory of a Novel," in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. P. Demetz, T. Greene and N. Lowry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968),72.

[1469] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 340.

also convey "a sense of the presence of the setting and facilitates spatial immersion."[1470] Realist novels "keep the readers 'recentered' because they successfully maintain a feeling of verisimilitude and experientiality while minimizing aesthetic distance."[1471]

Therefore, reading does not involve the mere contemplation of the novelistic world. Like hypnosis, it involves imaginatively *inhabiting* the fictional space, a process which incorporates a certain degree of mobility, and allows the recentered consciousness to occupy various successive points of view, and project itself into virtual "bodies" and perspectives. As Ryan notes, it is recentering that allows us to experience fictional worlds—i.e. "nonfactual possible worlds"—as actual, which forms the basic condition for immersive reading."[1472]

A new conception of hypnotic dissociation can thus emerge from this analysis of novelistic recentering. Indeed, in hypnotic dissociation we lose touch of our surroundings simply because we are in touch with another, imaginary, reality. This is why Roustang defines hypnotic trance not as a "special state" but as a mere shift in the object of attention:[1473]

> Unlike what one might expect, dissociation is not a state or mode of being which can be circumscribed. Dissociation is 'dissociating from'. It does not separate two elements; it does not point to an empty space between two distinct or opposing entities.[1474]

[1470] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 130.
[1471] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 335.
[1472] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 103.
[1473] See Roustang: "A book, a film, a voice, a searching spark our interest, absorb or fascinate us. But if they take us out of an environment, it is only because they have offered us another one. Therefore, here, we merely have a shift in attention, a change in the object of awareness." Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?,* 66, our translation. Hypnotic absorption is thus: "an intensification and redistribution of attention," with the converse effect that "the light on the rest on the attentional spectrum is decreased… the rest of the surrounding world dies away." Göran Rossholm, "Mediating Immediacy," in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts,* 88.
[1474] Roustang, "Se dissocier: mais comment faire autrement?," 28-29, our translation. Roustang furthermore emphasizes the "wokeness" and lucidity involved in the process, rather than a dulling of the mind. Indeed, he calls hypnosis "veille paradoxale," a state of being paradoxically awake, not "asleep," with a strongly active mind, whose activity differs from that of conscious awareness. He calls the ordinary state of consciousness "veille restreinte" (restricted awareness), as opposed to "veille généralisée," (generalized awareness) the latter being constituted of the hypnotic extension of the former. His vocabulary therefore does not suggest a difference in kind between ordinary and "abnormal" states of consciousness, but rather, varying degrees in the scope of awareness. With this reframing, absorption can be defined as a form of concentration and trance as a focusing, a narrowing of the attention which remains sharp as it concentrates on internal objects. See also: "the persuasive representation of absorption characteristically entailed evoking the obliviousness or unconsciousness … *to everything other than the specific objects of their absorption.*" Fried, 31, emphasis added. Unconsciousness, then, is not an absence of awareness *in general,* but a disregard of anything other than the object of attention. Indeed, "in trance there is a reduction of the patient's foci of attention to a few inner realities; consciousness has been fixated and focused to a relatively narrow frame of attention rather than being diffused over a broad area, as in the more typical general reality orientation of our usual everyday awareness… We narrow the focus of attention to the point where one's usual frames of reference are vulnerable to being depotentiated" Rossi, in *Hypnotic Realities,* 227.

Rather than as a pathological loss of touch with reality, hypnotic dissociation is the mirror opposite of absorption, stemming from a shift in the object of awareness.

3.2 2.5. Situation and the Adventure of Reading

Simone de Beauvoir's theory of novel reading in her essay "Literature and Metaphysics" and her contribution to *Qu'est-ce que la literature?* provides an account of novelistic immersion that describes reading as a process of becoming absorbed and situated into another "other" world, which neither actual life, nor other genres of writing allow us to experience.[1475]

As Toril Moi and Yi-Ping Ong show in their reading of her texts, for Beauvoir, a non-fictional text or essay doesn't "draw the reader in the same way" as a novel does—"a scholarly book fails to transport the reader out of herself," it does not lead the reader to "change universe."[1476] In a journalistic or sociological account for instance, "I remain at home, in my room," and the knowledge about the individuals I read about remains "theirs," in "their world."[1477] Novels, on the other hand, "invite me and convince me, to settle down, at least for a moment, in the heart of another world," which is to say, to temporarily assume another 'I' and hence, another "situation."[1478]

Reading novels, therefore, provides an experience reminiscent of hypnosis, first because of the spellbinding power of their mode of world-disclosure. In Beauvoir's account, the reader is "bewitched by the tale that he is told," reacting "as if he were faced with lived events."[1479] As Moi

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[1475] Simone de Beauvoir, in *Que Peut la Littérature?,* ed. Yves Buin (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, Coll. 10/18,1965); English translation, "What can Literature do?" trans. M. Timmermann, in *The Useless Mouths and Other Writings,* ed. M. A. Simmons and M. Timmermann, (Urbana: University of Illinois University Press, 2011), and "Literature and Metaphysics," in *Philosophical Writings* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 270. For readings of Beauvoir's theory of the novel, see Yi-Ping Ong, "Detotalized Totality: Situation, World, and Being-in-the-Novel," in *The Art of Being,* 151-193; Toril Moi, "What Can Literature Do? Simone de Beauvoir as a Literary Theorist." *PMLA* 124, no. 1 (2009): 189-198; and "The Adventure of Reading: Literature and Philosophy, Cavell and Beauvoir," in *Literature and Theology* 25, no. 2 (June 2011): 125–140.

[1476] Moi, "The Adventure of Reading," 133-4; Beauvoir, in *Que Peut la Littérature?,* 82. "A metaphysical novel that is honestly read, and honestly written, provides a disclosure of existence in a way unequaled by any other mode of expression." Beauvoir, "Literature and Metaphysics," 276.

[1477] Beauvoir, "What can Literature do?" 201.

[1478] Beauvoir, Ibid. Indeed, we do not see the world as a totality but rather, we inhabit it as individual agents and are situated in it, in relation to it. See for instance: *"*Situation is the common product of the contingency of the in-itself and of freedom," the "total facticity, the absolute contingency of the world, of my birth, of my place, of my past" but also "that which unifies and explains all these facts, that which organizes the, in a totality capable of description instead of making of them a disordered nightmare." Sartre, *Being and Nothingness,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 488; 548-49, quoted in Ong 163-64.

[1479] Ibid. 270.

notes, all her life, "Beauvoir praised novels that allowed her to feel immersed, absorbed, spellbound. A novel had to 'take' *[prendre]*: take her in (make her believe in it) and take her over (spellbind her)."[1480] Furthermore, Beauvoir—who, as Moi indicates, thinks of language as speech acts—also insists on the importance of the author's voice as the key characteristic of literature, which ties form and content together.[1481] It is partly the experience of being "taken by" a world created by "the presence of a human voice" that lies the power of novelistic absorption.[1482] In this sense, the psychological identification with fictional characters is not the only criterion for absorption to occur. As Yi-Ping Ong shows, the novel's absorptive force relies "not only upon its representation of character life, but also on its capacity to engulf [the reader] entirely within the wholeness and intricacy of an other-world."[1483]

Indeed, absorption here stems from the feeling of adopting another situation of being immersed in (and identified with) a *world*: "whether there is a character or not, for reading to 'take,' I have to identify with someone: with the author; I have to enter into his world, and his world must become mine."[1484]

This absorptive experience is one of being transported, not merely into a world, but into another "relation to the world."[1485]

Indeed, in novel reading we are led to relate to the fictional world from a specific point of view, which resembles that of hypnosis, and lies on a central paradox: the novel provides access to the "detotalized totality" of *another* world as it appears to (and is perceived by) another consciousness, which is impossible in ordinary life.[1486] The novel "allows us to see the world from

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[1480] Moi, "The Adventure of Reading," 134.
[1481] Moi, "What Can Literature Do?," 194; "To find a way of telling a story is at once to find a rhythm and a subject matter." Beauvoir, in *Que Peut La Littérature?* 84-85.
[1482] Moi, Ibid. This of course recalls the ability of hypnotic discourse to dissociate the subject and re-associate him or her to the imaginary world. In both cases, the world cannot exist without the voice which both carries and creates. One of the difficulties posed by Beauvoir's concept of voice is the criteria for generic distinctions in literature: "Novels, autobiographies, and essays can all be literature, as long as they have the necessary voice." Beauvoir, in *Que Peut La Littérature?* 84.
[1483] Ong, 154.
[1484] ("Il faut que j'entre dans son monde et que ce soit son monde qui devienne le mien") Beauvoir, in *Que Peut La Littérature?* 81-82.
[1485] "What distinguishes the novel as an aesthetic form from mere information, and what evokes its reader's absorption in the reality it narrates, is in part its effective representation of a worldhood as the detotalized totality of a situation" Ong, 159. This does not imply identification with a psychological author–rather it involves switching perspectives: Moi notes that identifying with the "person" of the author here specifically means "to occupy the same position (the same spatial coordinates as it were) in relation to the world" as her. Ibid., 193.
[1486] As Beauvoir argues, in existential philosophy, we do not see the world as a totality in its unity, that is, as something immutable that one could survey as a world map. Rather, as Sartre showed, the world is a "detotalized totality": "there is a world that is indeed the same for us all, but on the other hand, we are all in situation in relation to it. … What is

the point of view of the other without ceasing to be ourselves."[1487] On the one hand, "the spell" of novelistic absorption depends on our being led to "inhabit" the fictional universe and thus on "the illusion or fiction that the novelistic world has become—for the reader-made-believer—*the* world."[1488] As Ong observes, this process "enables the representation of world to unfold as if independently of the totalizing perspective of an author/beholder."[1489] In this context, the "miracle" of literature lies in effacing our awareness of relating to the work or art *qua* work of art, and in how reading can seems to be able to bridge the gap that inevitably separates individual "solitudes" in the actual world.[1490] It gives us the "taste of another life," helping us overcome the ineluctable existential separation present in the everyday and in this sense, communicates the uncommunicable.[1491] On the other hand however, in novel reading I am "fascinated by a singular world that overlaps with mine and *yet is other*."[1492] This world remains other and conversely, readerly absorption does not lead to a total loss of self: "another truth becomes mine without ceasing to be other. I renounce my own "I" in favour of the speaker; and yet I remain myself."[1493] A "good novel" transports the reader into its world, but it does not so much make him or her "take the fiction for reality, as be able to experience the fiction as deeply as reality, *while full well knowing that it is fiction.*"[1494] We are thus transported, but "without ceasing to be ourselves."[1495]

Finally, novel reading resembles hypnosis as it involves a willingness to risk opening up to this other word or voice. As Moi writes, "a good novel, for Beauvoir, is an invitation to the reader to share the author's sense of exploration and discovery, to join her on an 'authentic adventure of the mind'," and expression Moi borrows from Cora Diamond.[1496] Participating in the

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most essential in the human condition and man's relation to the world is precisely what is defined by this unity of the world that we express and yet at the same time this singularity, this demoralization of the points of view we take on it. … The situation in which we find ourselves in relation to it." Beauvoir, "What can Literature do?" in *The Useless Mouths,* 198-99.

[1487] Moi 134.

[1488] Ong, 162. "Situation is precisely that which allow the detotalized totality of a world to appear to emerge independently of the necessity of positing an objective perspective upon that world." Ong, 165.

[1489] Ong, 162.

[1490] The separation is that "I will die a death that is absolutely unique for myself." Beauvoir, "What can Literature do?" 199-201.

[1491] Moi, Ibid., 193-4.

[1492] Beauvoir, *Que Peut*, 82; emphasis added.

[1493] Beauvoir, Ibid., 82-83 in Moi, "The Adventure," 134.

[1494] Moi, Ibid.

[1495] Beauvoir, Ibid, in Moi, Ibid.

[1496] Moi, 133. Cora Diamond notes that for Henry James, the adventurous reader is one who is immersed in a particular kind of attention to things, and "delights in there being more in things than meets the eye." Ibid., 136. See Cora Diamond "Missing the Adventure: Reply to Martha Nussbaum," *Journal of Philosophy* 82, no. 10 (1985): 530-531. This account of absorption-as-adventure answers potential fears of dispossession and loss of self, raised by the

novelistic adventure, like hypnosis, involves letting oneself be absorbed: like the hypnotic subject, the novel reader "has to be-open-minded. She has to be willing be willing to take up the writer's invitation to join her on an adventure."[1497] This does not involve being merely deluded. Rather, reading novels, like hypnosis, is "not so much to take the fiction for reality, as to be able to experience the fiction as deeply as reality."[1498] In this context, a reader who "willingly participates in the adventure of the novel lets herself be absorbed by it."[1499]

Here, the "adventure" of novelistic absorption is less a matter of dispossession than a *disposition* and openness to the experience of otherness. Like hypnosis, it involves a willingness to fully experience the world as it is presented by another voice, and implies an active participation leading to inhabit another situated perspective, rather than a passive "taking over" of the mind.

3.2.2.6. Possession

The most extreme metaphor that links novelistic and hypnotic immersion is that of possession, which we discussed in Chapter 2 in the context of nineteenth-century conceptualizations of the "hypnotic unconscious" and (dis)possession in *The Horla.*

A telling example of the use of possession in the field of twentieth-century literary criticism, however, is formulated by George Poulet, in his 1969 paper "Phenomenology of reading."

In the opening paragraphs of this article, Poulet describes reading as a mutual interpenetration between subject and object: "The extraordinary fact in the case of a book is the falling away of the barriers between you and it, You are inside it; it is inside you; there is no longer either outside or inside."[1500] This fusion with an "other I," is not with that of the author, but with a consciousness that exists only in the work. As Poulet writes: it is "open," it "welcomes me, lets

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"hypnotic" powers of literature, as described in Chapter 2. In the case of hypnosis, "missing the adventure" would involve the operator lacking adaptability and/or the subject rejecting hypnotic suggestions in a therapeutic context. Ordinary Language Criticism might point out that such resistance would be less a failure of the hypnotist than an act of self-exposition on the part of the subject, a revealing of what matters to him; perhaps of a lack of openness–caused by fear, inattention, or even conscious refusal to engage in the experience of the 'other world.' It would correspond to the psychological equivalent of a refusal of the 'illumination' offered by literature as it is described by Beauvoir. Moi; 137. We will return to this question of the ethical dimension of literature and absorption in Chapter 4.

[1497] Moi, 134.

[1498] Ibid.

[1499] Moi, "The Adventure of Reading," 134. This involves a special kind of attentiveness, as "adventure and attention are intrinsically linked," a question to which I will return in Chapter 4. Ibid., 137.

[1500] Georges Poulet, "The Phenomenology of Reading," *New Literary History* 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1969): 54.

me look deep inside itself, and even allows me … to think what it thinks and feel what it feels."[1501] During this process, the book as material object disappears and leads to an experience which, like hypnosis, takes place on the plane of the immaterial: while I read, the material is dematerialized and objects become mental, objects of consciousness.[1502]

Significantly, Poulet's description emphasizes the autonomy of such significations and objects, which consciousness has no control over, and yet constitutes, giving them a "home": "in this interior world where, like fish in an aquarium, words, images and ideas disport themselves, these mental entities, in order to exist, need the shelter which I provide; they are dependent on my consciousness."[1503]

The lexical field of surrender and subjection then brings Poulet's description of reading close to traditional hypnotic tropes: "As soon as I replace my direct perception of reality by the words of a book, I deliver myself, bound hand and foot to the omnipotence of fiction… I become the prey of language. There is no escaping this take-over."[1504] Here, as in hypnosis, the reader becomes the subject of the thoughts of another and experience them as his or hers: "Because of the strange invasion of my person by the thoughts of another, I am a self who is granted the experience of thinking thoughts foreign to him. I am the subject of thoughts other than my own.

[1501] Poulet, Ibid., 54.

[1502] "While reading, I perceive in my mind a number of significations which have made themselves at home there. Doubtless they are still … objects of my thought… [The book] is nowhere." Ibid., 54. "That thing made of paper, as there are things made of metal or porcelain, that object is no more, or at least it is as if it no longer existed, as long as I read the book. For the book is no longer a material reality. It has become a series of words, of images, of ideas which in their turn begin to exist. And where is this new existence? Surely not in the paper object. Nor, surely, in external space. There is only one place left for this new existence: my innermost self." They "lose their materiality," become "images, purely mental entities… in order to exist as mental objects, they must relinquish their existence as real objects." This blurs the subject-object division: "since everything has become part of my mind, thanks to the intervention of language, the opposition between the subject and its objects has been considerably attenuated." We share a strong sense of intimacy with these objects which have become mental, Poulet describes as rapport: "it replaces those external objects with a congeries of mental objects in close *rapport* with my own consciousness." Poulet, Ibid., 54-55, italics in original. See also Benson's account of aesthetic absorption (absorptive reading "breaks down initially given divisions" and the self "gives itself over to the power of the object"), based on Dewey's anti-dualistic notion of the aesthetic experience, in which "no such distinction of self and object exists." Ciarán Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 12; 150; John Dewey, *Art As Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 249. Benson's account is also relevant to our purposes as it is based on psychoanalytic theories of infantile undifferentiation. See for instance Margaret Mahler's definition of symbiosis as "a state of undifferentiation, of fusion in which the 'I' is not yet differentiated from the 'not I' and in which inside and outside are only gradually coming to be sensed as different… The essential feature of symbiosis is hallucinatory or delusional, somatopsychic fusion with the representation of the mother and, in particular, the delusion of a common boundary of the two actually and physically separate individuals." Mahler, *On Human Symbiosis and the Vicissitudes of Individuation,* vol 1. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1969), 9. See Benson, 12-22.

[1503] Poulet, Ibid., 54-55.

[1504] Ibid., 55.

My consciousness behaves as though it were the consciousness of another."[1505] Here, self-possession seems to have turned into dispossession, threatening my existence as reader and subject: "here I am thinking a thought which manifestly belongs to another mental world, which is being thought in me just *as though I did not exist.*"[1506]

As in Maupassant's *Le Horla,* Poulet's description of reading involves a strong sense of alienation and invasion, which moves from the exterior toward the interior: "this *thought* which is alien to me and yet in me, must also have in me a *subject* which is alien to me" … When I read… The I which I pronounce is not myself."[1507] Poulet even goes as far as to personify the work that comes alive in the reader's mind:

> So long as it is animated by this vital inbreathing inspired by the act of reading, a work of literature becomes at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends a sort of human being, that is a mind conscious of itself and constituting itself in me as the subject of its own objects.[1508]

Like in *Le Horla*, a "second self" seems to have taken over, "which thinks and feels for me."[1509] However, in Poulet's account—as in the hypnotic trance—this is not a total obliteration. Rather, it is a temporary surrender, a suspension: "whatever sort of alienation I may endure, reading does not interrupt my activity as subject."[1510]

Reading is the act during which "the subjective principle which I call *I*, is modified in such a way that I no longer have the right, strictly speaking, to consider it as my I. *I am on loan to another,* and this other thinks, feels, suffers, and acts within me."[1511] This "alienation" thus resembles Benson's concept of recentering much more than Maupassant's inescapable possession: "my subjectivity alters with the alteration of intentionality."[1512]

Indeed, for Poulet "the annexation of my consciousness by another (the other which is the work) in no way implies that I am the victim of any deprivation of consciousness."[1513] Indeed, in a description reminiscent of Ernest Hilgard's "secret observer," Poulet mentions the presence of

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[1505] Ibid., 56.
[1506] Ibid., emphasis added.
[1507] Ibid. "Reading is just that: a way of giving way not only to a host of alien words, images, ideas, but also the very alien principle which utters them and shelters them" … "any feeling proposed to me is immediately assumed by me." Ibid., 57. Further on, Poulet also uses a vocabulary similar to that of Maupassant: "spell"; "possession"; "taken over"; "dispossession"; "takes hold"; "appropriates," etc. Ibid., 59.
[1508] Ibid., 59.
[1509] Ibid., 57.
[1510] Ibid.
[1511] Ibid., emphasis added.
[1512] Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 152.
[1513] Poulet, "Phenomenology," 59.

an observer or a critic, who remains active throughout the process and shares consciousness with the work.[1514] This presence makes itself felt with a temporal lag—a dissociated split of sorts—in a manner reminiscent of hypnosis, where the self is able to observe the experience which unfolds: in the "common consciousness" or "community of feeling" where the work "occupies the foreground," I "record passively all that is going on in me. A lag takes place, a sort of schizoid distinction between what I feel and what the other feels; a confused awareness of delay."[1515]

Poulet's account is thus useful to us in that it allows for variation in *degree*s of critical awareness, a spectrum between distance and fusion:

> Critical consciousness does not necessarily imply the total disappearance of the critic's mind … criticism can pass through a whole series of nuances … discovering the various forms of identification and non-identification … the variations of which this relationship—between criticizing subject and criticized object—is capable.[1516]

As Benson notes, as it is described by Poulet, the experience is both temporal and temporary: "what matters is to live, *for the time of reading,* inside the work that is 'inside' me."[1517] As in hypnosis (and unlike what occurs in Maupassant), the "possession" is a voluntary "loan," in which the changes in subjectivity caused by the change in intentionality only take place as long as one is willing and as allows the experience to last. At any moment, temporary and willing dispossession can turn back into repossession of subjective experience as *mine.*[1518] This temporary and gradual dimension shows that, even with strong metaphors of reading as possession, the complete annihilation of subjectivity on the recipient's side is just as impossible to achieve as absolute transparency is on the narrator-operator's side.

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[1514] "This astonished consciousness is in fact the consciousness of the critic." Ibid., 60.
[1515] Ibid., 59-60.
[1516] Ibid., 60.
[1517] Benson, 152, emphasis added.
[1518] In response to Poulet's argument, Norman Holland explicitly draws the parallel between hypnosis and the act of reading: "the subject / hypnotisand feels the personality of the hypnotist as though it is a part of himself, and when the hypnotist says 'your hand feels cold': your hand does feel cold, which I think is rather like the way we respond to a book." Norman Holland, Response to "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," in *The Structuralist Controversy,* ed. R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2007), 87. However, Poulet refuses the parallel and says his conception of reading involves an action we perform on a "fully conscious" level, with a cogito still operating. However, he then concedes there can be a "sort of cloudy consciousness" (not the subconscious proper, he says). Ibid., 88. Richard Macksey proposed "preconscious." Given our definition of hypnotic trance as a spectrum which allows for the presence of consciousness, Poulet's account (of being "on a loan to another") is not incompatible with our analogy. Poulet, "Phenomenology," 57. For another perspective, see also Peirce: thoughts are "mine" for as long as I think them, "as long as I am their subject and they are my present thoughts," in Benson, 151.

From this exploration of the various "hypnotic" metaphors for novelistic immersion, a similar element reemerges in each instance: every time, a certain degree of distance and awareness remains on the part of the subject. In other words, regardless of the degree of immersion, the illusory dimension of the aesthetic experience, whether novelistic or hypnotic, is never *total.* Rather, an irreducible trace seems to remain, pointing toward the artificial and conventional nature of the aesthetic medium, despite all efforts on the part of the creator to conceal the "trickery" with which aesthetic illusions are carried out. As we saw in the various hypnotic-immersive metaphors used in literary criticism, this artificial dimension can never be fully eliminated, only willfully and temporarily suspended. This process, as I argue, is also at the heart of the hypnotic experience.

As we saw, even in realist fiction "the illusion of reality is created by artistic means, by selection, concentration, ordering, webs of images, metaphorization, repetition, stylization," and so on.[1519] As J. Hillis Miller notes, although they present themselves as *mimesis*, they "contain the linguistic clues allowing to recognize" their fictionality.[1520] In the same way that a "tremendous gulf," as Gombrich writes, "separates the reading of pictures from the sight of the visible world," realist narratives are the product of the "artificiality of art."[1521] To confuse the representation with its object and "equate the one with the other," as Gombrich notes, is to "bar one's way to the

[1519] Furst, 42.
[1520] J. Hillis Miller, "The Fiction of Realism: *Sketches by Boz, Oliver Twist* and Cruikshank's Illustrations," in *Dickens Centennial Essays,* ed. A. Nisbet and B. Nevius (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 104.
[1521] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 229; Furst, 42.

understanding of representation."[1522] Indeed, as Flaubert famously wrote to Louise Colet, "La première qualité de l'Art et son but est l'illusion."[1523]

And indeed, the Balzacian maxim "all is true" should not overshadow nineteenth-century novelists' own awareness of the "artificiality" of their art, even in the case of realism. For instance, in "Le Roman"—his 1888 Preface to *Pierre et Jean*—Maupassant describes the thin, "almost invisible" strings which the realist author must "pull" to compose his work.[1524] Underlining the conventionality and artificiality of the genre, Maupassant writes of the novelist: "He must therefore compose his work in a manner so skilled, so concealed, and of such simple appearance, that it is impossible to perceive and point out its structure (*son plan*) and uncover its underlying intentions."[1525] Realist authors must:

> make necessary corrections to events and favor verisimilitude at the expense of truth, because sometimes, truth is not realistic (*vraisemblable*) … Art, on the other hand, consists in using precautions and preparations, to create subtle and concealed translations, to bring into full light, with mere skill of composition the essential elements, and give to all others a suitable degree of relief, depending on their importance, so as to produce a deep impression of the special truth which one wants to show. … Producing the effect of truth (*faire vrai*) thus consists in giving the complete illusion of truthfulness. … I conclude from this that talented Realists should rather be called Illusionists.[1526]

[1522] Gombrich, Ibid. Gombrich offers examples taken from the visual arts. Perspective, for instance, does not reproduce "the appearance of things"; rather, it is a set of conventions that create an illusion by relying on our ingrained expectations and assumptions as beholders. For Gombrich, all artistic discoveries are "discoveries not of likeness but of equivalences which enable us to see reality in terms of an image and an image in terms of reality. And this equivalence never rests on the likeness of elements so much as on the identity of responses to certain relationships." Indeed, "as we scan the flat pigments for answers about the motif 'out there', the consistent reading suggests itself and illusion takes over. Not … because the world really looks like a flat picture, but because some flat pictures really look like the world. … Long before experimental psychology was ever thought of, the artist had devised this experiment in reduction and found that the elements of visual experience could be taken to pieces and put together again to the point of illusion." And just as the hypnotic experience implies the subject's cooperation and transformation of utterances into an internal world, "the interpretation of art is the act by which the beholder "collaborate[s] with the artist" to "transform a piece of colored canvass into a likeness of the visible world." For Gombrich, "All representations are grounded on schemata which the artist learns to use. …The achievement of the innocent eye … turned out to be not only psychologically difficult but logically impossible. The stimulus … is of infinite ambiguity, and ambiguity as such … cannot be seen–it can only be inferred by trying different readings that fit the same configuration." Gombrich, 261; 313; 345; 329; 292.

[1523] "The most important quality and aim of art is illusion." Flaubert, Letter to Louise Colet of September 16, 1853, *Correspondance,* 2: 483.

[1524] "All the threads, so thin, so secret, almost invisible, used by certain modern artists in place of the single string that was once called: Plot." Maupassant, "Le Roman," (1888) in *Pierre et Jean* (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 2018), 14. Our translations.

[1525] Maupassant, "Le Roman," 41.

[1526] Ibid. 16**.** Maupassant then goes on to describe a worldview which shares similarities with the radical constructivism of modern hypnosis: "What childishness, furthermore, to believe in reality since we each carry our own in our thoughts and our organs, Our eyes, our ears, our smell, our taste are all different and create as many realities as there are men on this earth. And our minds which receive the instructions from our organs, receiving various impressions, understand, analyze and judge as is each and every one of us belonged to a different race. Therefore, we all create for ourselves an illusion of the world, a poetic, sentimental, joyful, melancholic, dirty or gloomy illusion, depending on one's nature. The writer's sole mission is thus to faithfully reproduce this illusion with all the artistic means which he

Even in realism, then, immersion is dependent on illusion.[1527] As Furst puts it, to recognize realism as a set of literary conventions—as does Maupassant—is to liberate it from the "crushing burden of *mimesis*."[1528] Once it is considered as "just another set of conventions," themselves "no closer to 'the real' than any other period style," realism reveals how, like other artistic genres, "its truth is that of illusion, not of imitation."[1529] Realism is not the art of revealing 'how things are' but, like hypnosis, of "getting the reader involved in the narrated events."[1530] A similar, central paradox thus lies at the heart of both hypnosis and the realist aesthetics. As Furst argues, we must:

> avow and accept a certain contradictoriness as a central feature of realism. That contradictoriness surfaces at the outset when Balzac proclaims his faith in the realist fiction's absolute truthfulness by citing a phrase from Shakespeare. The paradox of this self-validation must not be forgotten; it represents the crack inherent in the texture of realism, which can be overlaid only by readers' allegiance to "Let's pretend."[1531]

This crack, on which realist fiction is constructed, is both the weakness and the *condition* of the hypnotic—illusionist—experience. However, as I have argued, it is in the reader-subject's ability to "overlay" the crack *via* active participation in the game of make-believe, that lies the truly "hypnotic" dimension of literature.

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has learnt and can utilize… Let us not confront any theory, as each of them is simply the generalized expression of a temperament which analyzes itself." Ibid.

[1527] See also: "recognition of credibility [not so much lifelikeness as lifeliveliness]." Northrop Frye, "Myth, Fiction, and Displacement," in *Fables of Identity* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), 29.

[1528] Furst, *All is True,* 23. For her, the strategies and "overt and covert signals emitted by the text" allow us to "extricate realism from the quagmire of mimesis" Ibid., 16. Ryan even points out that "the 'reality effect' of nineteenth-century fiction is achieved by the least natural, most ostentatiously fictional of narrative techniques, such as omniscient narration, free indirect discourse, variable focalization," all of which "presuppose morphing narrators whose manifestations oscillate between embodied, opinionated human beings and invisible recording devices." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 159

[1529] Ryan, Ibid., 159.; Furst, 16. Using the example of the nineteenth-century belief in causality, as opposed to the twentieth-century conception of reality as "ungraspable," Ryan also reminds us that "every period has a different view of reality and every stylistic innovation is made in the name of this interpretation." Ibid., 160 Nelson Goodman also notes that realism involves not resemblance but of ease of decoding and depends on the reader or spectator's familiarity with a certain set of representational techniques. Goodman, "Reality Remade," 293, in Ryan, Ibid.

[1530] Ryan, 161. In fact, Ryan even points out that "the 'reality effect' of nineteenth-century fiction is achieved by the most ostentatiously fictional of narrative techniques—such as omniscient narration, free indirect discourse, and variable focalization—all of which "presuppose morphing narrators whose manifestations oscillate between embodied, opinionated human beings and invisible recording devices." Ryan, 159.

[1531] Furst, *All is True,* 47.

3.3. The Literary Dimension of Hypnosis

You are the music / While the music lasts
—T.S. Eliot, 1969.

In the previous section, I discussed the hypnotic dimension of literary discourse, by underlining the immersive, yet conventional, dimension of the aesthetic and realist illusions. In the last section of this chapter, I will explore its mirror opposite—the literary dimension of hypnotic discourse—by underlining the poetic dimension of hypnotic utterances. While I temporarily extend my analogy beyond novelistic prose and include poetry into my scope of inquiry, I do so to underline the literariness of hypnosis, as opposed to non-literary forms such as the philosophical text, historical treatise, or journalistic essay. Once the poetic dimension of hypnosis discourse has been established, in Chapter 4, I will narrow down my claim once again, to draw out the similarities between hypnotic and specifically *novelistic* forms of narration.

3.3.1. The Poiesis of Hypnotic Discourse

In 1929, the Prague School claimed that language "has either a communicative function, that is, it is directed toward the signified, or a poetic function, that is, it is directed toward the sign itself."[1532] Furthermore, according to Jakobson's famous definition of the poetic function of language, "poeticalness is not a supplementation of discourse with rhetorical adornment but a total re-evaluation of the discourse and all its components whatsoever."[1533] Can similar definitions

[1532] Cercle Linguistique de Prague, 1929, 14, in Pratt. As Pratt notes, the "devaluation" of ordinary language is used by literary authors themselves, who proclaim the superiority of poetic discourse. For example, Valery describes "everyday language" as a "medium essentially practical, perpetually changing, soiled, *a maid of all work.*" Paul Valéry, "Poetry and Abstract Thought," 81, emphasis added. Similarly, Mallarmé describes ordinary communication or speech as "no more than a commercial approach to reality." Mallarmé, "Crisis in Poetry," 41. Rilke claims that "The poet's task is increased by the strange obligation to set apart his word from the words of everyday life thoroughly and fundamentally. No word in a poem is identical with the same-sounding word in common use and conversation… the constellation it occupies in verse or artistic prose, changes it to the core of its nature, renders it useless, unserviceable for mere everyday use, untouchable and permanent." Rilke, "Letter to Countess Margo Sizzo-Crouz," trans. E. Rennie, in *Selected Letters* (New York: Double Day, 1960).
326.

[1533] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 376-77. For Jakobson, despite its lack of poeticity, novelistic prose represents "a transitional linguistic area… between strictly poetic and strictly referential language." Jakobson, Ibid.

illuminate the workings of hypnotic discourse? That is, can the latter be considered as a form of poetic discourse, or if not—as Jakobson thought of novelistic prose—an in-between between purely "referential" ordinary communicative language, and "strictly poetic" language?

In an article titled "How to Use Ericksonian Approaches," psychiatrist Richard Van Dyck points out the "stylistic and aesthetic qualities" in Erickson's work, which according to him participate in constituting therapy "into an art."[1534] Although Van Dyck claims these aesthetic qualities "are not indispensable for a satisfactory outcome in treatment," for him, they indicate a "clear departure from earlier unsophisticated methods which sought to eliminate symptoms by direct and repetitious suggestion."[1535] Indeed, like literary texts, hypnotic language pays close attention to the form, rather than the explicit message, of what it strives to express. Hypnotic discourse is founded on the premise that imaginatively evocative language is more powerful than explicit, paraphrasable content. A defining aspect of hypnotic communication is that its form affects and determines its content. As I will argue in what follows, in the sense that they are unparaphrasable, hypnotic propositions make use of what may be considered an aesthetic use of language.[1536]

3.3.1.1. Musicality

The first aspect that comes to mind when the poetic dimension of hypnotic discourse is brought up, is the musical and rhythmic qualities involved in the traditional, trance-inducing aspects of hypnosis—which also justify the comparison between versified poetry and hypnosis. As we saw in Chapter 1, not only has music accompanied hypnosis since the time of Mesmer and his glass harmonica, hypnotic *rapport* itself, was conceptualized with the lexical field of harmony. Even in its modern definition—that is, when it refers to the hypnotist's ability to adapt his or her linguistic and communicative strategies to the individuality and uniqueness of the subject[1537]—rapport is frequently described with tropes pertaining to the musical universe.

[1534] Van Dyck, "How to Use Ericksonian Approaches," 43. See also: therapy is "an art in itself." Haley, "The Contribution to Therapy of Milton H. Erickson," 18.
[1535] Van Dyck, Ibid., 43-44.
[1536] See Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.
[1537] Just as for Iser, "each text constitutes its own reader." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 157. In Ericksonian models, each hypnotic relation is conceived of as unique: "a hypnotic induction need[s] to vary with the type of person the hypnotist was, the nature of the subject, and the particular situation." Haley, "The Contribution," 16. See also: "every time we open the pages of another piece of writing, we are embarked on a new adventure in which we become a new person…

Indeed, the utilizational approaches found in modern, permissive hypnosis show strong similarities with the qualities involved in musical cooperation, especially in the context of improvisational music:

> He [the operator] freely admits that he does not know exactly which path will lead to the desired state ... But he does know that he can get *"in tune" with* the subject, thereby establishing a *rhythmic*, continuous feedback loop on which one closely observes, accepts and utilizes the subject's ongoing response. In this sort of interaction, the trek toward the desired state unfolds in a nonlinear, spiral-like fashion.[1538]

> Induction is a process in which the hypnotist uses his body *as a musical instrument,* tuning it to *get into rhythm* with the "behavioral *dance"* of the subject.[1539]

> The hypnotist synchronizes himself with the subject, accepting and utilizing any material … much like an improvisational musician.[1540]

In this sense, as Gilligan argues, "there really is no such thing as resistance in a utilization approach."[1541] Indeed, "resistance" is but a "message" signaling that the operator is "out of tune"

We assume, for the sake of the experience, the set of attitudes and qualities which the language asks us to assume." Gibson, 1980, 1, in Gerrig.

[1538] Gilligan, "Ericksonian Approaches," 90, emphasis added. The image of musical "tuning" (which is not innate to the musician but can be acquired via technique) brings hypnosis close to theater once more: as the therapist effaces himself and adopts a variation of roles depending on the case at hand, he or she uses "the self in a wide range of ways from being authoritative to being helpless." Haley, "The Contribution," 13. The main resource of nineteenth-century and authoritative models of hypnosis (the power or authority of the operator) thus counts as one role–or therapeutic strategy–among many: as in literary texts, play has taken the place once occupied by the "center" that was the author. Indeed, Jay Haley notes the extreme flexibility involved in the utilization approach and how Erickson "expected a therapist to have an actor's control of his own use of body movement and vocal intonation." Haley, Ibid.

[1539] Gilligan, 101, emphasis added.

[1540] Erickson and Rossi, *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook* (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1979), 32. See also Derrida's interview of Ornette Coleman, in which reading is compared to free jazz improvisation: "The very concept of improvisation verges upon reading, since what we often understand by improvisation is the creation of something new, yet something which doesn't exclude the pre-written framework that makes it possible… Repetition is already in improvisation: thus when people want to trap you between improvisation and the pre-written, they are wrong." Derrida, "Jacques Derrida Interviews Ornette Coleman," 323. For descriptions by free-jazz musicians of the similarities between improvisation and the state of hypnosis, see also: "If you're doing it right there is hypersensitivity and hyperawareness of all sound that is coming in and feeds the improviser's output… Often, one is often in a state of heightened vulnerability and the self ceases to matter… the watcher and doer disappear. In free improvisation… I sometimes mimic, sometimes follow, sometimes ignore, but it's always going through me and being filtered, always being honored. One needs a very high degree of technical familiarity with one's instrument, and to be in a state of highly attuned awareness. Many of the improvisors whom I have played with in my life unfortunately don't seem to be playing *with* the other musicians as much as they are playing *for* the audience." J. Gilgore, alto saxophonist, personal communication, 2018. See also: "Improvisation is not the art of making up, it is the art of emptying oneself of all preset ideas, not making up music but just praying and attempting to live a life in the spirit…. it's order being inside you. The poet is born from this concept, it is not about art or music, it is about the vision of life without war and starvation and all the things that make us less human. We step on flowers and do not feel them. Every day we are stepping on some kind of flower, crushing it, asking it to grow on our terms, instead of allowing it to grow on its own." William Parker, *Who Owns Music,* trans. R. Da Rin (Köln: Buddy's Knife Jazzed Edition, 2007).

[1541] Gilligan, 92.

and needs to "synchronize" himself—behaviorally or verbally—with the subject, using the "resistance" to his advantage.[1542]

In addition to operating as a metaphor to describe hypnotic rapport, musicality is also involved in the very form of hypnotic utterance. Indeed, some excerpts from hypnotic inductions are indistinguishable from poetic verse when taken out of context, as is the following passages taken from an Ericksonian induction:

> In my voice you can hear/
> The whispering wind, /
> The rustle of leaves./
> (Pause)
> And then my voice becomes that of some neighbor/
> Adult friend, relative, someone known.[1543]

Or

> You get the feel of a poem/
> the feeling of a picture/
> the feeling of a statue/
> we do not just feel with the fingers.[1544]

Significantly, these passages are annotated as such (in "verse" form, with the sign / in between clauses) in the manual in which they are published, and could very well be read as poetry by Stanley Fish's students in *Is There a Text in This Class?*[1545]

If one adopts a formalist conception of poetic discourse such as those used by the Prague school, which assume that "rhythmic organization is alien to non-literary discourse and can thus be taken as a distinctive feature of the poetic language," then hypnosis and poetry no longer seem like absolutely heterogenous and unrelated forms of language.[1546] For instance, if one follows Osip

[1542] Ibid.
[1543] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities,* 91.
[1544] Ibid., 252.
[1545] See Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.
[1546] Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory,* 13.

Brik's definition of verse in terms of the interaction of rhythm and syntax, a hypnotic induction can be considered as a form of poetic discourse:

> Verse … is regulated by the laws of rhythmic syntax, that is, a syntax in which the usual syntactic laws are complicated by rhythmic requirements… The very fact that a certain number of words coexist with the two sets of laws constitutes the peculiarity of poetry.[1547]

Based exclusively on formal criteria, the poetic-nonpoetic language distinction—which would "view style as an exclusively or predominantly literary phenomenon" and "equate style outside literature with mere grammaticality and conventional appropriateness"—would have to include hypnotic discourse into the category of the poetic.[1548]

Conversely, in his 1930 study titled *Hypnotic Poetry,* Edward D. Snyder classifies poems into two opposed categories, distinguishing "intellectualist poems" on the one hand and "hypnotic" or "spell weaving poems" on the other.[1549] In the latter, "hypnotic" sort, one finds a "soothing rhythmic monotony" and "a certain kind of rhyme" which put listeners "into a light state of trance" when "read aloud under favorable conditions."[1550] As they fall into "poetic trance," their "emotional sensitiveness" then "grows more and more, sometimes reaching the point of ecstasy."[1551] Significantly, this is due to the fact that listeners have their attention "drawn to the sound rather than the sense" of the poem.[1552]

For Snyder, the hypnotic dimension of poetry is caused "pleasing" formal traits and "dreamy and harmonious" sounds—such as the repetition of pleasant liquids and nasals—and to

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[1547] Osip Brik, 1927, 121-122, quoted in Pratt, Ibid.
[1548] Pratt, Ibid., 15.
[1549] Snyder, *Hypnotic Poetry; A Study of Trance Inducing Technique in Certain Poems and its Literary Significance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930). Snyder's early twentieth century notion of hypnosis, which he conceives as a former of stupor and opposes to "mental alertness," appears as conservative and antiquated to the modern permissive practitioner. His criteria for the "poetic" and contextual requirements for the hypnotic reception to occur are extremely narrow. For instance, for him free verse—which he describes as "the unorganized product of an undisciplined mind"—is too irregular to "fix the attention on a sound pattern and deaden mental alertness." Snyder, 69; 114. Although he insists in the importance of reciting or reading out loud, he does concede that a "silent yet auditing" reading of a poem can "produce a state of light trance." He also notes a similar transference of hypnotic or "power" from the author to the reader a in Plato's *Ion:* "we should find little interest in the 'inspired trance' of the poet unless he had the power to put his readers into something of a trance." Snyder, 35; 21.
[1550] Snyder, 26; 17; 22. As examples of hypnotic poems, Snyder mentions the iambic opening of Coleridge's Kubla *Kahn, Annabel Lee,* "the popular ballads rich with incremental repetition, in the majestic blank verse soliloquies of Marlowe and Shakespeare, in the grandest passages of Milton. One feels its soothing dignity in Gray's *Elegy* and its potent malignity in the curse of his *Bard.* One finds it again in the lilting melodies of Burns's lyrics, and on throughout the golden pages of nineteenth-century poetry. It still lives today [*in the 1930s*] in the most effective passages of Kipling and Noyes." Snyder, 156.
[1551] Ibid., 31.
[1552] Ibid., 42.

trance-inducing patterns of rhythm, rime, refrain, etc.[1553] In other words, hypnotic and poetic efficacy are associated with classical aesthetic norms of regularity and harmony, and to the fact that the poet uses "the very highest artistry to satisfy the ear."[1554]

Snyder's depiction of hypnotic rhythm as "soothing monotony," however, is highly reductive. Indeed, in modern hypnosis, the operator introduces multiple moments of variation, silence, acceleration and deceleration, which are dictated by the pace of the subject. In a process called "cross-behavioral pacing and leading" for instance, the operator synchronizes one of his behavioral parameters (such as the rhythm of his or her breathing, or the tonal inflection in his or her voice), to match a parameter of the subject.[1555] In this way, both individuals form a rhythmic duo that evolves in improvised unity, and makes room for a wide diversity of inflections.

Paying special attention to the rhythm of delivery, the operator uses dynamics of "pacing" (that is, following or mirroring) and "leading," to create a suggestive push-pull effect in the communication situation. When the hypnotist stops mirroring the subject and begins to "lead" or influence the rhythm of the "duo," he or she should be able to shift between a "quick tempo" and "dramatically reduce it to create contrast," to "master his tone" and speak "meaningfully, impressively, congruently," quietly, softly or authoritatively, etc., depending on the desired effect.[1556]

[1553] Ibid., 52; 75.
[1554] Ibid., 52.
[1555] Gilligan, "Ericksonian Approaches," 91. For example, every time the subject breathes out, the tonal inflection of the operator goes down. This process is a specific form of a more general process of mirroring which aims to first reflect back the subject's nonverbal and paraverbal communication before beginning to insert modifications into them. **"**Control" of the subject is thus not achieved via coercion but indirectly, by (re)directing their attention in order to allow suggestions to be accepted and enacted. Another example is the "interspersal technique" with which suggestions are "planted," usually with a slightly different tone of voice and "in the form of a truism," within the broader context of a general conversation "about a topic which the patient can easily identify with." The therapist then "quickly moves on" to the general conversation "before the patient can react to the suggestion. The same is done with embedded stories: a series of four or five nested stories is begun, with a central suggestion placed in the middle, before the series of nested stories is "closed." This usually results in an amnesia: the suggestion is often forgotten because of the cognitive overload involved in following the thread of the embedded narratives. Pacing and leading are furthermore merely technical aspects of the more general implementation of hypnotic *rapport,* in which the hypnotist himself goes into an "externally-oriented trance" and observes the subject so closely that "the sole contents of the hypnotist's consciousness are the subject's behavior rather than the internal imagery that normally pervades thinking processes." This form of close attention therefore produces "a paradoxical state in which the hypnotist simultaneously experiences complete rapport with the subject and an observational detachment from the interaction." Gilligan, 91-93. The necessity for the operator to be in trance rather than operate solely from rational and analytic thought is often encouraged: "to enjoy skiing and truly master the art… you must learn to integrate your movements with your changing perceptions at speeds too fast for the conscious mind." Paul Carter, "Rapport and Integrity for Ericksonian Practitioners," in Zeig (ed.), *Ericksonian Approaches*, 48.
[1556] Ibid., 100.

When necessary, the operator can also produce a purposefully monotonous enumeration, at the end of which a suggestion is placed, in order to create a contrast, to highlight the final clause. A frequent example of this technique consists in enumerating "ratifications" (lists of short and "direct descriptions" of the immediate environment or the subject's behavior) to create assent, before introducing a suggestion at the end. For example:

> You're sitting there
> You're looking at me
> You're breathing in and out
> Eyes blinking
> and you shift in your chair
> and you can begin to shift in a comfortable state of relaxation [*final suggestion*].[1557]

This type of sensitivity to rhythm can be found in literary texts, including novels. In *Anna Karenina*, for example, one finds a passage that presents a similar, rhythmic use of enumeration (which I am purposefully transcribing with the same typographic disposition as the hypnotic inductions cited above):

> Further on it was all the same;
> the same jolting and knocking,
> the same snow on the window,
> the same quick transitions from steaming heat to cold and back to heat,
> the same lashing of the same faces in the semi-darkness,
> and the same voices,
> and Anna began to read and understand what she was reading [*final "suggestion*"].[1558]

In the context of a hypnotic interaction, this passage would correspond to an inductive loop, where rhythm is used strategically—the lulling effect and repetition of the "ratifications" and of the term "same" leading to the culmination in a final suggestion, for the subject to "read and understand

[1557] Gilligan, Ibid., 90. The last clause is not a description, but a suggestion, which gives an order, disguised as a description. Placed at the end of the enumeration and "blended in" with the conjunction "and," the suggestion is supposedly accepted more readily and made less visible.

[1558] Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina,* 100. Here, not only is the rhythm of the paragraph reminiscent of the pace that the operator might use, its very construction matches the basis structure of an inductive loop in which the operator enumerates a series of ratifications, that culminate in a suggestion which, at the end of the enumeration which multiplied instances of the subject's assent ("yes there is jolting and knocking," "yes there is snow out the window," etc.), is more likely to go unnoticed and be accepted. Most strikingly, the introduction of the suggestion via the conjunction "and," (serving to imply a causal connection while masking the fact that it is merely one of contiguity or juxtaposition), is one of the key elements of such inductive loops.

what they are reading." Here also, an implicit command would be disguised as description. As this example shows, not only do hypnotic and literary discourse share similar formal properties, their literariness or hypnotic effect also depends, as we argued earlier in the chapter, on the context in which they are received.

As I have argued here, hypnotic uses of language resemble literary ones with their sensitivity to the effects of pacing and rhythm on the awareness of the recipient. The felicity of hypnotic utterances depends on the recipient's activity, but also on the operator's awareness—and use—of "stylistic" elements that are often considered as being characteristic of poetic discourse.[1559]

3.3.1.2. Suggestive Language

In modern indirect hypnosis, because "commands" are introduced covertly rather than explicitly or authoritatively, close attention is payed to the suggestive power of language, which, as we will see in what follows, refers in this context, both to the "metaphorical" and to the "manipulative" dimensions of language.

Beyond its "poetic" dimension in the formalist sense, hypnotic language can also be said to resemble literary discourse in four distinct manners: in its strategic, narrative, metaphorical (or connotative) and ambiguous (or disorienting) uses of language.

Strategic Communication

Rather than transparent, modern hypnosis is a strategic, form of communication. It frequently uses the power of linguistic implication to guide the subject's behavior in a desired direction, or simply as an inductive method. This requires paying attention to the implicit connotations of individual terms—such as when the operator might purposefully use the verb "try

[1559] The operator's adaptation to the subject's world view also involves paying detailed attention to lexical fields and choice of words. For instance, the operator selects his or her vocabulary to fit the preferred sensory modalities of the subject: "When the client specifies he doesn't *see* how to overcome his difficulty" for example, Erickson would "package his verbal communication with visually oriented verbs and nouns like 'clear,' 'picture,' 'focus' or 'bright'. If the client says there is no *harmony* in his marriage, E would utilize auditory packaging phrases such as 'tune-in', 'hear', 'listen'… or 'amplify'. Kinesthetically based words include 'touch, relax, comfort, sit, hold, grasp, feel, embrace, solid, and grip'. Most important …. is judicious packaging… for each client's individual framework." Stephen R. Lankton, "The Occurrence and Use of Trance Phenomena in Nonhypnotic Therapies." In *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis,* 135.

to" whenever he wishes the subject to fail at a specific task, because it implies the idea of "a block, a difficulty" rather than ease or success.

On the level of the proposition, presuppositions by implication are one of the most frequently used hypnotic tools, whenever the operator wants to help a subject succeed at a given task.[1560] In each case, the subject's attention is diverted: it is invited to focus on less important elements while the main—suggested—element recedes into the background, and is more readily accepted. In this way, the subject can be held to a task by subtle directives and implications while maintaining "a very great subjective feeling of freedom of choice."[1561]

The most common form of presuppositions used by modern hypnotists are "binds" (which present a "free" choice between two or more comparable alternatives, but where all choices count as a "valid" reaction)[1562] and "double-binds" (in which the operator makes a statement while simultaneously commenting on it on a higher, "meta-level" of communication).[1563] Reminiscent of post-modern or eighteenth century metanarrative comments made by novelistic narrators, hypnotic double-binds aim to "confuse the subjects' conscious mind and thus depotentiate their habitual sets, biases and learned limitations. Under these circumstances the field is cleared for the possibility of creative processes to express themselves."[1564]

[1560] For example, the utterance "I don't know which hand will lift first" implies that one of them will; the utterance "before you go into trance, you ought to be comfortable" implies that they will do so; when Erickson tells a volunteer who is walking onto a stage: "Don't enter trance / until/ you sit all the way down/ in that chair/. There," his utterance implies that if they sit in the chair, they accept the act of going into trance, etc. Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 118. Other examples include "would you like to experience a light, medium or deep trance?"; "would you like to go into trance sitting up or lying down / quickly or slowly?"; "do you begin to experience numbness in the fingers or the back of the hand first?"; "What part of the body begins to feel most X (warm, cool, heavy, etc.). Ibid., 64.

[1561] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities,* 11.

[1562] Indeed, "whichever choice leads behavior in a desired direction" (Rossi, 62); and "whatever they do tends to propel them further into the hypnotic situation of following suggestions." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities,* 77.

[1563] Rossi, *Hypnotic Realities,* 62. See Bakhtin: "We acutely sense two levels at each moment in the story; one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings and emotional expressions, and the other, the level of the author, who speaks (albeit in a refracted way) by means of this story and through this story." Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" (1931), in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays,* trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 314. See also Gregory Currie, for whom the fictional author can engage simultaneously in acts of assertion and fiction making and who "may intend his audience to believe what he says and also intend that the audience (perhaps a different audience) will take the attitude of make-believe toward what he says." Currie 35. In both literature and hypnosis, a single utterance can be intended to have simultaneous, yet distinct meanings and "addressees." Furthermore, modern hypnosis uses "allusions, puns, metaphors, implications," because they are usually not grasped immediately by consciousness: there is a momentary delay before one 'gets' a joke, and in part, what is funny about it." Rossi, *Hypnotic Realities*, 228. It addresses itself to the unconscious mind, and is reminiscent of the parable or riddle in that their meaning, morality or resolution are often purposefully ambiguous or founded on paradoxes and apparent contradictions.

[1564] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 70. In "Conscious-Unconscious double binds" or "Double-dissociation double binds," the action is performed by the unconscious while the conscious may mind remains inactive, unaware, or even unable to comprehend the operator's instructions. For example, possible responses to: "You can as a person awaken/

Narrativity

As I will argue in more detail in Chapter 4, both hypnosis and literature also make heavy use of the narrative mode. A hypnotherapy session and novel can be thought to have in common a similar *telos* or necessity which drives them onwards, towards a resolution—often of an internal conflict.[1565] In this sense, the hypnotic session may be conceived as following a narrative arc, similar to the structure of a novel.

Furthermore, like most brief-therapies, modern hypnosis relies on the therapeutic value of "re-storying"—of retelling and redirecting one's life narrative—and on the art of "reframing"—of illuminating a present situation under a different aspect, which usually allows its problematic dimension to dissolve.[1566]

Hypnotherapy also frequently makes use of fictional narratives to get therapeutic messages across in a more fluid and indirect manner. The operator will dissimulate indirect suggestions in seemingly unrelated case histories (real or invented), stories and anecdotes.[1567] Even when such narratives are "minimal," they conserve their "literary" dimension, as is the case for natural

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but you do not need to awaken as a body (Pause)" or "You can awaken when your body awakes but without a recognition of your body" might be experiencing the impression of leaving body, the appearance or hallucination of bodily distortion, etc. In the following case: "You can write that material without knowing what it is/ then/ you can go back and discover you know what it is without knowing you've done it," the response could be automatic writing, followed by amnesia upon reading, etc. Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 48; 69; 71. Similarly, Erickson often "offers" suggestions in an open-ended manner that admits many possibilities of response as acceptable: "suggestions are offered in such a manner that any response the patient makes can be accepted as a valid hypnotic phenomenon." Rossi in *Hypnotic Realities*, 48. In this way, it is extremely difficult for such suggestions to be rejected by the subject: they are "infallible" or the subject cannot fail at them, because of their openness. For example, to create hand catalepsy, various options will be evoked so as to broaden the possibilities of success for the subject "Your arm will feel entirely comfortable/ at ease/ or it may lose all feeling/ or it may develop a wooden feeling,/ a feeling of not being your arm/ I'd like to have you interested in discovering your way of handling that arm (pause)." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 98.

[1565] See Aristotle. However, as notes in the improvisational music analogy, in hypnosis the path is not prewritten, and the resolution must come from the subject. Paradoxically, some operators use hypnotic scripts: formulaic mechanical applications of predetermined stories, for therapeutic use. This type of method brings hypnotherapy closer to the standardized method, which is less successful than an individualized, tailored, utilizational approach.

[1566] See for instance M. Erickson, *Life Reframing in Hypnosis,* ed. E. Rossi and M. O. Ryan. (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1992). See also: "The classic case is Tom Sawyer, forced to spend a tedious day whitewashing the fence…soon being paid by other children for the 'opportunity' to do his work for him." Beahrs, "Understanding Erickson's Approach,"72. See also Ryan, about computer simulations, which like hypnotic narratives "have nothing to do with deception; they are not supposed to re-present what is but explore what could be; and are usually produced for the sake of their heuristic value. … To simulate, in this case, is to test a model of the world." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 63.

[1567] Storytelling and anecdotes are also used as induction tools. For example, while his patient Dr. S is asked to focus on a spot, Erickson "talks about kindergarten and learning, imagery and comfort, the abilities of the unconscious and some alterations of the blink reflex," constructing a conversational induction "so innocuous and indirect that it is often difficult to recognize that trance is being induced." Rossi, *Hypnotic Realities,* 5.

narratives examined by William Labov.[1568] Indeed, *"*all the problems of coherence, chronology, causality, foregrounding, plausibility, selection of detail, tense, point of view and emotional intensity exist for the natural narrator just as they do for the novelist."[1569]

Metaphorical, Connotative and Evocative Language

However, the multi-level communication device which brings hypnotic discourse closest to poetic language is not its strategic or narrative uses of language (which are also present in non-literary discourse), but rather, its metaphorical—and connotative—use.

Indeed, while scientific discourse aspires to denotation, hypnotic and literary discourse both "thrive on the associations latent in words" and the connotative power of poetic language.[1570] Roustang thus argues that hypnotic metaphors and images have a "stronger" therapeutic impact than pure analytic interpretations: "Images which are infinitely richer than all interpretation. … The power of the imagination, of the single image, when it sums up the complexity of a relation to the world."[1571]

Even though in scientific texts, "context itself instructs readers *not* to attend" to the connotative dimension of language, "rhetoric and attitudinal coloring are inevitable conditions of all language… Language is a powerfully committing medium to work in. It does not allow us to

[1568] See also: a minimal narrative is "a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered." William Labov, *Language in the Inner City* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press 1972), 360. See also Pratt: "if it weren't for the fact that his [Labov]'s data are not literature, Labov's analysis could have provided valuable linguistic support for the Formalists' idea about the aesthetic organization of narrative." Pratt, 68.

[1569] Pratt, 66. Modern hypnotic discourse also has a quasi-intertextual or dialogic dimension, as it integrates foreign discourses (quotations, commentaries, parody, allusion, imitation, ironic transformation, de/recontextualizing of elements, puns, analogies, folk-language, etc.) into its narratives.

[1570] Furst, *All is True,* 149.

[1571] Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?,* 52. As an example of the therapeutic potential of hypnosis to transform the subject's relation to their past, Roustang describes a case history of a patient whose identity is constructed on passivity, victimhood, lack of responsibility and complaint: "Throughout his life, he expected to be pitied" ("Toute sa vie il attend d'être plaint"). Roustang used hypnotic regression to bring back the memory of the subject as little boy, standing at the foot of his mother's casket, with all eyes on him. The child is held up so he can see, which he experiences as being "like a god shown to the crowd… he is but the result of those eyes staring at him" ("Il n'est plus que le résultat de ces yeux portés sur lui." Under hypnosis, the patient then relives the scene, focusing this time on his mother, not the audience, and imagines himself addressing her: "I will not forget you but I will live my own life, with this suffering as the soil in which my life will grow." As Roustang then notes: Here lies the decision, the remolding of one's relation to the past, a reorientation in the world: an act which re-writes the story/history" ("Là est la décision, une refonte du rapport au passé, une réorientation dans le monde" : un acte qui réécrit l'histoire"). This re-imagination is of course not a modification of the memory itself, but the permission given by subject to himself to inaugurate the end of the mourning period. Ibid., 51.

'say something' without conveying an attitude to that something."[1572] As Genette notes, "what the statement says is always in some way doubled, accompanied by the manner in which it is said, and the most transparent manner is still a manner."[1573]

Although in modern hypnotherapy, tremendous emphasis is placed on the value of therapeutic "metaphors," the term is not used in the sense in which Jakobson banished realism from the realm of the metaphorical and the poetic. For instance, as Steven Heller notes, in the therapeutic context:

> All presenting problems and symptoms are really metaphors that contain a story about what the problem really is. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the therapist to create metaphors that contain a story that contains the (possible) solutions. The metaphor is the message. … Hypnosis is, in and of itself, a metaphor within a metaphor.[1574]

In hypnotherapy, the term "metaphor" refers to an analogy—established in the operator's speech or therapeutic strategy—between the client's symptom or problem and an exterior element which illuminates it under a new aspect. In the therapeutic setting, metaphors are often embedded in "isomorphic" anecdotes, which present similar formal or structural elements with the identified "target context." For example, a seemingly unrelated anecdote about farming will be used to address a developmental difficulty, and so on. [1575] Significantly, to be therapeutically effective, not only does this isomorphism *not* need to be obvious, it is *preferable* that the relations between the elements connected in the analogy go unnoticed: "when the nature of the isomorphism is not readily available to conscious awareness … arises the possibility of having a therapeutic impact without the client's conscious understanding of the process."[1576] The primary function of hypnotic

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[1572] Ibid., 151; Roger Fowler, *Linguistics and the Novel* (London: Methuen, 1977), 75 For Jakobson, "realist discourse, at least by implication, is relegated to a lesser status as not possessing the poetic quality of metaphor." Ibid., 161.

[1573] "Le style… reste lié à ces effets de sens seconds que la linguistique nomme des connotations. Ce que dit l'énoncé est toujours en quelque sorte doublé, accompagné par ce que dit la manière, et la manière la plus transparente est encore une manière." ("Style… remains linked to those secondary sense effects that linguists call connotations. What the statement says is always in some way doubled, accompanied by the manner in which it is said, and the most transparent manner is still a manner") Genette, "La littérature et l'espace, " in *Figures II* (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1969)*,* 47. The operator can be considered as applying Genette's formulation literally, simultaneously addressing, via the connotative power of language, two distinct "levels" in the subject, and focusing mainly on the *form,* rather than merely the content, of his suggestions.

[1574] Steven Heller, *Monsters and Magical Sticks,* 51.

[1575] Erickson's case histories provide numerous illustrations of this process, constructing anecdotes that often draw analogies between therapeutic elements (symptoms, problems and solutions), and elements taken from the natural realm (drought, death, plants, growth, walking, etc.)

[1576] Ibid., 116.

metaphors is thus to evoke and work-through problems indirectly, without mentioning them in an explicit manner.[1577]

In "Ericksonian Anecdotal Therapy," David Gordon thus defines a hypnotic metaphor as "a story or anecdote that is capable of accessing in its listener an intended content area, without the content being explicitly identified," leading to a change of perspective which is "usually attributed to the inherent virtues of the analogy or resolution … in the metaphor."[1578] Hypnotic metaphors are "special opportunities to learn within the particular analogical environment created by the storyteller." In this sense, they are the tools of indirect and implicit communication *par excellence.*

Because they are often *purposely* vague, general or ambiguous, they have the undeniable advantage of "provid[ing] the substance from which its listener is free to carve whatever understanding he or she finds consciously or unconsciously appropriate."[1579] In any case, hypnotic metaphors are based on the acknowledgment that we relate to the world in metaphorical ways, seeing beyond what we perceive, constantly injecting meaning into the elements around us, as in a literary text.[1580]

In addition to therapeutic metaphors, hypnosis uses a variety of other indirect techniques, including "evocation," which essentially corresponds to the literary maxim, "show don't tell." Based on the assumption that a detailed description of a phenomenon will create a related phenomenon or state in the subject—for example, describing heaviness will create a similar sensation in one of the subject's limbs, describing instances of forgetting will encourage amnesia, and so on—this technique presupposes that an indirect evocation is less likely to fail than a direct suggestion, especially when facing a subject's resistance.[1581]

[1577] The presupposition here is that excessively direct and frontal modes of communication creates resistance in the subject.

[1578] David Gordon, "Ericksonian Anecdotal Therapy," in *Ericksonian Approaches,* 113.

[1579] Ibid., 114.

[1580] Gombrich notes that imagination and creation of metaphor is part of our "twin nature, poised between animality and rationality." Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* 103. Indeed: "To our emotion, a window can be an eye and a jug can have a mouth; it is our reason which insists on the difference between the narrower class of the real and the wider class of the metaphorical, the barrier between image and reality." Ibid., 104. In her study of place in the realist novel, Furst has also noted that "metaphoricity is innate to the landscape of consciousness insofar as it presents a view of a place in its relation to the persona and/or the action." Furst, *All is True,* 141.

[1581] To suggest amnesia, the operator might for example evoke the process of losing or forgetting: "it's a very remarkable thing/ that you can lose an arm, a leg/ an entire moment./ You can forget where you are. (Pause)." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities,* 42. To create time distortion, the operator can evoke the fluidity of subjective: "time can be of varying intensity/it can be condensed/it can be extended/ so you can review a lifetime history in a few seconds time./(Pause) Those few seconds can be expanded/ into/ years./ Also a few days can be condensed/ into a moment…"

Alan Leveton, for example, retells a case history which shows how the metaphorical evocation of an imaginary landscape can be put to both inductive and therapeutic use, and how embedded indirect suggestions in the story facilitate the process.[1582] As Leveton explains, the technique of evocation was necessary in this case, as the patient was afraid of hypnosis *per se,* and resisted more direct methods of induction. By using the indirect yet inductive powers of evocative description, Leveton therefore created a hypnotic experience in a covert manner, without naming it as such:

> We would not "do hypnosis," but she might remember some place where, when she was little and safe at home, she felt secure. … It was a pond near her house with reeds that sheltered ducks, with hidden flowers, soft sounds of wind and wavelets. She enjoyed describing her special pond … so bright was the sunlight reflected on the cusps of the little waves that they tired her eyes; so warm was the sun that she felt relaxed and drowsy; so pleasing was the memory that to see and to feel it more fully she might shut her eyes. Around the pond she noted her favorite trees, where she could seek shelter from the sun. Those trees had been there a long time and she found them the most attractive. They guarded her pond. Their roots penetrated deep into the nourishing soil; their leaves permitted the sun's light to pass through in a muted way; their branches reached as far upwards into the air above as their roots penetrated deeply below. Her boyfriend could stay very alert and watch her closely, and soberly note how firmly safe she was by her trees, by her pond.[1583]

In this example, the landscape serves as a metaphorical pretext for meaning to latch onto, and facilitates therapeutic change: it is a symbolic, mental landscape. [1584]

Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 136. To create hypersthesia, evocation of a blind person's acute sensory perception can be used: "A blind person/hears and feels/and smells someone else./He cannot see that person,/ but he can hear how tall a person it./ He can tell,/ talking with the person,/ Just by his speech to the person/…/because there is a different sound bounding off that person's body back to his ears./ He can tell if a person is facing him or has his back to him./ We all have so much knowledge/ of which we are unaware/ (pause) Will you stop to think about it?/ We do not know (pause)/ which use/of your awareness/ of things/you will use." Erickson, Ibid., 247. Rather than suggesting fatigue explicitly, Erickson used an arithmetic explanation as a stimulus for evoking an external reaction of being polite, which in turn evoked an internal response of boredom, which led her to feel fatigued." Rossi, *Hypnotic Realities*, 267. When using direct suggestions on the other hand the operator takes more risks: "the therapist can only hope the subject will cooperate" with instructions that explicitly identify and state what the desired response should be and are thus at higher risk of failing. Rossi, Ibid., 267. Also, as Erickson has noted, "with direct suggestion we always have the problem of simulation. With indirect suggestion however there can be no question of voluntary compliance as the subject does not notice the suggestions: "if a response does take place, it is mediated by involuntary processes outside of a subject's immediate range of awareness." Erickson, Ibid, 26.

[1582] The case is that of a couple in which the woman has frequent seizures of an "unexplainable" nature, and whose partner thus has to care for attentively. The rest of the time, the latter is absent/drinking (the woman's symptoms thus have strong secondary benefits).

[1583] Alan F. Leveton, "Family Therapy as Play. The Contribution of Milton Erickson," in Zeig, (ed.), *Ericksonian Approaches,* 202. The therapeutic meaning of the metaphor is explicated in the text, but left unformulated in the session: "And what do you imagine was the most interesting quality of those trees? That they stood securely upright. They could do this because their roots were so strongly anchored and because of the wonderful, strong flexibility of their trunks. They were neither so limp that they couldn't stand, nor so rigid that they might break in a strong wind. In the expectable winds by that pond they could make slight adjustments as they stood upright. They could sway, even sway noticeably, but not fall down. … After this session she could stand on her own two feet and no longer needed to be carried out of the office. She had markedly fewer seizures… She began a business which involved making storage racks out of a kind of wood she particularly liked." Leveton, Ibid., 202-203.

[1584] Similar to the "isomorphic environments" described higher up by Gordon, (1978).

As Furst notes, novels also present "landscapes of consciousness" which are filtered through the minds of the characters, and where metaphoricities operate.[1585] Furthermore, for Furst, "while purporting and pretending to be real," in a novel, a place "only becomes so for readers by virtue of the symbolical, metaphorical force it assumes within the frame of the narration."[1586] As characteristic examples, Furst analyzes the house[1587] and the city,[1588] both of which reveal the symbolic charge of spatial descriptions, even in texts which strive to achieve objective descriptions such as Zola's "experimental," naturalist novel.[1589]

Similarly, hypnosis exploits the metaphorical charge of places in order to work through unconscious material and conflicts. The creation of mental landscapes, the manipulation of imaginary objects is a central—Roustang writes, almost "banal"—aspect of hypnotherapy.[1590] For example, Roustang describes the case of a patient who constructs and spatially moves towards his own "house" but struggles to enter it. Only when he is able to enter the house does the therapeutic solution emerge:[1591]

> He sees a house at the bottom of the garden. I ask him to walk towards the house. He cannot, as it is surrounded with a magnetic field. Can he wait while he keeps looking at the house? The garden is not taken care of, the lawn is not mown. Then, after a long silence, he finds himself inside the house. It is small but very neat, it is made just for him. Nobody else may come inside thanks to the magnetic field. This house is

[1585] Furst, *All is True,* 119. Bruner defines "landscapes of consciousness" as "what those involved in the action know, think or feel, or do not know, think or feel." Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 14.
[1586] Furst, Ibid.,142.
[1587] The symbolic dimension of the house in the Freudian topography goes without mentioning ("The ego is not master in its own house." Freud, *Standard Edition, XVII*, 142). See also Jay Haley, who describes the mind as a "many chambered room with entrances and exits which often operate independently of each other." Haley, "The Contribution to Therapy," 25. For examples of literary domestic spaces which are related to the inner lives of realist characters, see: in Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* the Vauquer boardinghouse, in Eliot's *Middlemarch* Casaubon's Lowick, in Mann's *Buddenbrooks* the landscape room, as well as "a whole spate of Jamesian homes" [in *Portrait of a Lady* for example, the house "stands in for aspects of the characters which inhabit them"], Furst, 140.
[1588] Furst notes how in the later nineteenth-century, cities "become the metaphor for mental anguish as buildings translate into places of desire or dread." Furst, 140.
[1589] In *L'Assommoir* for example, one can consider that the staircase and the dye in the water are charged with aesthetic and symbolic (thematic, metaphoric, connotative) power, as the various colors running in the water form a recurrent and "striking symbolical metaphor… to mark the stages of Gervaise's rise and fall." Furst, 169.
[1590] "Devenues banales dans la pratique des hypnothérapeutes." ("Having even become banal in hypnotherapeutic practice today") Roustang, 30, our translation.
[1591] The patient in question suffers from a "chronic inability to set boundaries, say no, not be 'invaded' and preserve his autonomy," for whom "all romantic relationships follow the rhythm of an alternating absorption and being-absorbed" ("toute relation amoureuse est rythmée selon l'alternance de l'absorber et de l'être-absorbé"). Roustang, 29. In a classical induction, Roustang invites the patient to go down staircase, then leaves 5 to 10 minutes of silence, during which the patient remembers having dreamt of entering a subway station before emerging into a garden. Roustang's suggestion then begins the spatial-symbolic deambulation: "I offer that he lets the dream pursue itself" [je qui propose de laisser se poursuivre le rêve"].

> his secret… One year later his relationships are healed. … When he feels bad, he returns to the house and finds his strength.[1592]

As in fiction, descriptions of place in hypnosis present a "metaphoric account of an individual's inner life or progress in the world."[1593] Both novelistic and therapeutic discourse are also charged with connotative and metaphorical potential, their discourse is thus not merely denotative or metonymic.

3.3.1.3. Ambiguous and Disorienting Communication

Like literature, hypnosis also engages in subtle play and experimentation with language and its limits.[1594] The saturating power of descriptive discourse is also used as an inductive tool in hypnosis. "Cognitive overload" is a common technique used by hypnotists, and is comparable to the precise descriptions—the Balzacian *tartine*—on which the realist illusion is based.[1595] Indeed, as Furst writes, "the superabundance that stems from fullness of specification, in rhetorical terms, from *amplificatio*, is generally regarded as one of the salient features of realism."[1596] However, as Furst notes, "overdetermination can impede or suspend the process of reading if readers feel overwhelmed by such onslaught of information that they lose grasp of the whole as a result of the inflation of a particular segment."[1597] The hypnotist uses this moment—in which the multiplication of detail, rather than forming a realistic picture, turns into an overwhelming sensation—to his advantage: by creating saturation on purpose, before inserting a suggestion into the attentional gap created by the hypertrophy of information. As we noted higher up, this way of facilitating the

[1592] Roustang, 30. Roustang goes on to explain: in the patient's "real" dream, a cat was scratching him and a woman was piercing his nail ("piquait son ongle") but in the hypnotic dream he found a solution and was able to enter the house ("le rêve diurnal a trouvé une solution"). One year later, he patient feels "freed from a constant oppression, capable of self-determination and thus of protecting himself" ("libéré d'une oppression constante, il se sent capable de se déterminer et donc de se protéger, quand il se sent mal, il revient dans sa maison et trouve sa force." Ibid.
[1593] Furst, *All is True,* 141.
[1594] For example, Erickson defines the hypnotic therapeutic process as "expediting the currents of change already seething within the person and the family—but currents that need the 'unexpected', the 'illogical' and the 'sudden' move to lead them into tangible function." Erickson, introduction to *Change*, 121.
[1595] See for example "l'hypertrophie du détail vrai ("the hypertrophy of the true detail")." Zola, Letter to Henry Céard, 22 March 1885, *Correspondance,* ed. H. H. Bakker (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1978-1992), 5: 249.
[1596] Furst, Ibid., 152.
[1597] Ibid. Indeed, "no other writer after Balzac imputed to readers the patient willingness to handle so massive a descriptive preamble" at the beginning of each novel. Ibid., 153. And the Nouveau Roman, "going too much against the grain of basic frames of representation…. Highlight[s] mediality as such and foreground[s] the conventionality of narrative," thus creating distance and breaking illusion. Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 38.

acceptance of suggestions is characteristic of modern indirect hypnosis, that uses distraction and counteracts conscious thought by overloading the subject's mind. This can either be carried out by prescribing various tasks (such as counting, listing, etc.), or with the excessive use of descriptive details, reminiscent of Nouveau Roman descriptions.

Furthermore, this "overloading" dimension of evocation is also used for its therapeutic potential. Indeed, varying the degrees of intensity in focus of the awareness can be put in the service of change, by turning rationality against itself in order to dismantle or reveal the limits of conscious, analytic thought. For instance, Roustang describes a case in which Erickson uses saturation, where the patient's focalization is pushed to its extreme, to create a form of hypnotic "hypersthesia"—or hyperawareness—which is used to remove unpleasant symptoms by placing exaggerated focus on them.[1598] Roustang shows how in Erickson's case, the solution involves the reduction *ad absurdum* of alert observation, and "pushing the work of attention until the destruction of its object," like in the Nouveau Roman.[1599] In this way, "the waking state, pushed to the limits of its possibilities, destroys itself."[1600]

In addition to "cognitive overload," another frequently used example of the "density" of language pushed to its limits in indirect suggestions, is the use of hypnotic "confusion." The latter comprises a wide scope of techniques, ranging from "pattern interrupts" (sudden changes in pace and shifts in the object of attention), to the use of paradoxes and riddles (meaning-production techniques whose therapeutic value is close to the use of Koans in Zen Buddhism), of confounding statements by "apposition of opposites" ("you can forget to remember or remember to forget"[1601]), to nonverbal confusion (such as inviting a subject to sit, by directing them verbally toward one chair while gesturing nonverbally to another chair[1602]), etc.

Just as hypnotic evocation can create the stability and safety of spatial *situation,* it can just as well use language to create spatial—or temporal—confusion and disorientation, which resembles Beckettian anti-narration:

[1598] For a patient suffering from a nausea-gag reflex: "I can ask the patient to really study this reflex. Where does it begin, where do you feel this sensation, concentrate on it" … "everytime you dissect something with detail you destroy it. You destroy its value." Erickson, 1986, 65, quoted in Roustang, 68. Roustang compares this process to Buddhist Vipassana meditation exercises, which focus on unpleasant sensations until they vanish *via* the act of thorough examination and equanimous inspection.
[1599] Roustang, 68.
[1600] Ibid. ("Pousser le travail de l'attention jusqu'à la destruction de son objet. … La veille restreinte poussée jusqu'à l'extrême de ses possibilités se détruit elle-même").
[1601] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 202.
[1602] Ibid., 146.

> I did know that from where I was *there then,* I thought to myself, I don't want to be *here now;* I want to be *there now,* and all I can remember is that to get *there now*, or at least soon from *now* from *here*, I take a combination of three *right* turns and three *left* turns… but don't know which is the *right* series of *rights* and *lefts*… but I do want to get *there* and I am *here now,* and so I said, all *right, pay attention very closely* [embedded suggestion in the imperative form], we've got to make it *right* or we'll be *left* behind, And *then* I said all *right,* I'll take a r*ight here* and *then* a *left* and *now* I'm *left* with two *lefts* and two *rights*... But I don't think that is *right*, so I'll take a *right* first, and *then* a *left,* and *now* I'm *left* with a *right* and... dead end. It's the *wrong* way. So I go back to the starting point so we don't get *left* behind... so I back track and *now* take three *rights* and three *lefts* again, except that each turn is *now* the opposite from the other direction… *everything is reversed*… *Now* which was *then* a *right* is *now* a *left* and that which was *left then* is *now a right* so for every *right then* it is *right now* to take a *left* and for every *left* then *it is* r*ight now* to take a *right,* and *now* we're back at the beginning, ready to begin again, and what a nice thing to know that you can simply *stop all activity and let your unconscious for the work for you*.[1603]

Unlike the Beckettian text however, which pushes language to its limit in order to underline the difficulty and hopelessness of representation and expression, the goal of confusion in modern hypnosis is to create receptivity in the subject, a "momentary gap in understanding that requires an explanatory suggestion."[1604] The receptivity is caused by the psychologically intolerable dimension of prolonged confusion and the need to reestablish meaning, stability, and structure, which are still assumed to be possibly retrieved. Modern hypnosis explains the success of older, authoritative models of hypnosis, by this very process:

> Under the shock and surprise of many of the older authoritarian approaches to hypnotic induction, it is obvious how the confusion-need-for–restructuring mechanism operated so automatically that it appeared as if the patient was hyper suggestible. This so-called hypersuggestibility, however, is actually the automatic acceptance of any acceptable restructuring that will end the intolerable confusion that has been effected by the hypnotic induction or any means of unstructuring the ego's usual frames of reference.[1605]

In this sense, all hypnotic inductions strive to produce a degree of destabilization, to "keep patients in flux, slightly off balance so they will continuously grasp on to whatever orientation [the operator] provides."[1606] Confusion thus is not a nihilistic technique, it implements the necessary destabilization from which something new and creative can emerge.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, hypnosis uses not only saturation and confusion, but also openness, ambiguity, and even vagueness, in a strategic manner. Unlike ordinary discourse, which aims for the efficient communication of information, hypnotic language does not hesitate

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[1603] Abbreviated from Gilligan, 100. The purpose of confusion is to facilitate the acceptance of a suggestion: once the subject seems sufficiently confused, the rhythm can be suddenly shifted and–as in this example–a suggestion inserted. The goal: to "confound the mind so it will be receptive to suggestion." Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 146.

[1604] Erickson, *Ibid.,* 146. "They don't know what to do. So then the therapist can tell them what to do. … If the surrounding reality becomes unclear, they want it cleared up by being told something." Ibid., 107**.**

[1605] Ibid.,145.

[1606] Rossi, in *Hypnotic Realities*, 196. The power of modern hypnosis however is no longer conceived as a process of subjection, but of horizontal communication: "Erickson relies on upon the skillful utilization of … *forms of communication,* rather than hypersuggestibility *per se,* to evoke hypnotic behavior." Ibid., 228.

to create absence of clarity, transparency or explicitness.[1607] Indeed, while "in everyday communication, lack of specificity can create a discrepancy between intended communication and message received," in hypnosis "vague phrasing can be helpful."[1608] Indeed, the "vague," open and permissive suggestions found in Ericksonian models lay strong interpretative responsibility on the recipient, who must fill in the gaps for the suggestion to have meaning: "There is less and less importance to be attached to my voice and that you can experience progressively (pause) any kind of sensations you wish."[1609]

Instead of directly instructing the subject to visualize a specific landscape, for example, permissive hypnosis uses extremely open suggestions to preserve the imaginative freedom of the subject:

> Now the next thing for her to do/is actually to develop an hallucination/ of, let us say, a specific landscape. One that she has not seen previously. But a landscape she would like. (Pause). Now, who knows what she would put in a landscape? Birds, trees, bushes rocks.[1610]

Or

> And now in a few moments when your unconscious is ready there may be a blankness or haziness in your visual field. (Pause) And how will that haziness develop? Will there be a fog or shadows? And when will the shadows begin to arrange themselves into definite forms? (Pause) Will your eyes be open or closed? (Pause) It will be interesting to find out whether it will be hazy or foggy or blurred. Or will things be unusually bright, sharp, and clear when you open your eyes? Will there be an alternation of the color background? Will some things be unusually clear and other things not seen at all? You can wonder and wait comfortably as that develops.[1611]

[1607] The poietic, esthetic quality of vagueness has been noted, by Poe for example: "the indefinite is an element in the true poiesis … indefiniteness is an element of the true music… of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential character … its breath of fäery." Poe, from *Marguinalia,* in Snyder, 43. As Gombrich has shown, in painting also ambiguity gives freedom to the imagination and interpretative faculties of the beholder. This emphasis on vagueness, silence or blankness can be seen for example in the idea of *"*giving expression to the invisible" in Chinese art, in the notion of *I tao pi pu tao [idea present, brush may be spared performance*], with which "a few simple strokes" capture details that need not be represented, simply evoked. Gombrich, 170. Similarly, Da Vinci's *sfumato* technique "cuts down the information on the canvas and thereby stimulates the mechanism of projection." Gombrich, 221.

[1608] Stephen R. Lankton, "The Occurrence and Use of Trance Phenomena," 137. Hypnotic language, even more if it is a prewritten script, resembles Iser's description of the literary schemata: "a hollow form into which the reader is invited to pour his own store of knowledge." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 143. For Gombrich the "empty or ill-defined areas" of the esthetic experience are even helpful and allow the recipient to project mental representations in accordance with his respective repertoire of experience. In this way, "with this descriptive indeterminacy, they depart of real life, yet create "a rich projective space for imaginative readers." Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?,"45. Like the hypnotic subject who faces blanks, vagueness and silence yet cooperates during the experience as a whole, for Furst, the reader of novels "accepts" rather than fills in all the gaps, incompleteness and indeterminacies because "we have made a fundamental commitment to pretend to believe *in the entire fiction*." Furst, *All is True,* 33.

[1609] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 30.

[1610] Ibid., 88.

[1611] Ibid., 79.

In these examples, permissive evocative suggestions admit "just about any possibility of a response in altered visual perception as a successful and interesting experience."[1612] Hypnotic discourse acts almost as a prompt, which leaves elements purposefully vague so as to stimulate the imaginative and creative faculties of the subject.

Similarly, Iser describes the "blanks" as a "stimulating" function of the literary text, which functions like hypnotic discourse, using vagueness and silence on purpose:

> By impeding textual coherence, the blanks transform themselves into stimuli for acts of ideation. In this sense, they function as a self-regulating structure in communication; what they suspend turns into a propellant for the reader's imagination, making him supply what has been withheld.[1613]

Indeed, as we saw higher up, with excessive dense or detailed description, the operator risks losing the subject's cooperation and attention. Unlike the older models, which gave out specific instructions to the subject, modern hypnosis uses open statements to counterbalance hyperspecific evocations and tasks. Furst notes a similar process in the history of the realist novel, which shifts from hyperspecificity to openness, from "dense" descriptions in the Balzacian style to more "suggestive" ones, as in Henry James' work.[1614] As Furst notes, these suggestive descriptions are, like those of modern hypnosis, "tentative and open-ended" and imply "a different reader than those projected by density."[1615]

Based on "extreme flexibility" rather than rigid or systematic methodology, modern utilizational approaches to hypnosis resort to indirect—suggestive, fictional, evocative, ambiguous or playfully specific—rather than direct communication.[1616] Like fictional texts, they acknowledge the value of "pointing out things with a parable or providing a somewhat confusing experience"

[1612] Ibid.

[1613] Iser, Ibid., 194.

[1614] After Balzac, "description is integrated into the action," diminishing in quantity "as density yields to suggestiveness." Furst, Ibid., 153. Upon closer inspection however, it is possible to argue that both authors use both modes, and rather than belonging to an author, a mode belongs to the subjectivity described in the test: "as the focalization becomes increasingly internalized in the course of the century, the protagonists can, solely according to their temperament, be made to draw on density or suggestiveness." Ibid., 160. Similarly, the modern hypnotist adapts his mode of evocation (dense saturation or minimalist, open-ended evocation) to his or her subject (for example, with very analytic individuals, one will prefer using saturation, with very cooperative or creative minds, simple evocations will often bring rich results, etc.)

[1615] Furst, 155. Density is prompted by "the postulate of unknowing readers in need of initiation and instruction" whereas in suggestive descriptions, the supposition is of "knowing readers capable of making associations… without explanation." Suggestive descriptions rest on the "assumption of readers' familiarity" with places such as Paris, London, or "Canal Street" as in James' *Washington Square.* A similar analogy can be drawn between the nineteenth century hypnotic subject and Balzacian reader, who is subjected to narrow guidance by the operator-narrator, and the Ericksonian subject-Jamesian reader, who is left the freedom of suggestiveness and ambiguity in the text. Furst, 155.

[1616] Zeig notes that Erickson considered theory as a "Procrustean bed that limits the practitioner's flexibility." Jeffrey Zeig, *Ericksonian Approaches,*145.

rather than addressing content in an explicit manner, or "endlessly arguing."[1617] These aspects, combined with the poeticity or musicality of its language, brings hypnotic discourse close to literary discourse, and therefore, offers a much richer experience than Snyder's "monotonous," lulling of the senses and intellect.

3.3.2. An "Art of Distances"[1618]

3.3.2.1. Aesthetic Distance

Poetic faith is famously defined as a *willing* and temporary suspension of disbelief.[1619] As I have argued so far, despite its immersive power, the aesthetic illusion is characterized by an irreducible aesthetic distance, and is therefore not a delusion but an "experiential pseudo-illusion."[1620]

Indeed, in his description of the aesthetic illusion, Wolf distinguishes an "analyzing ego" from an "experiencing" ego with which it coexists in most cases; insisting on the fact that aesthetic illusion is "a feeling … that prevails in spite of the fact, and our latent awareness of it, that this impression is triggered by a 'mere' artefact."[1621] A similar aesthetic distance also occurs in the hypnotic experience, which in this sense, functions as an aesthetic activity. In both hypnosis and aesthetic illusions, immersion is never total. Unlike delusion, the experience elicited by aesthetic illusions has a characteristic "*as-if"* quality: "the illusion-producing object creates a feeling of verisimilar lifelikeness, but not of life *tout court*."[1622]

[1617] Van Dyck, "How to Use Ericksonian Approaches," 38.

[1618] See Corina Stan, *The Art of Distances: Ethical Thinking in Twentieth-Century Literature* (Evanston, Illinois Northwestern University Press, 2018).

[1619] Coleridge, *Biographia literaria*, 169.

[1620] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 328.

[1621] Wolf, Ibid., 325. "Total distance and total immersion do not yet, or no longer, qualify as aesthetic illusion" Ibid. 329.

[1622] Emphasizing the distance implied in the aesthetic experience goes against the tendency of cognitive science inspired literary theory and cognitive narratology's conception of the reader's reactions to fictional characters as analogical to ordinary reactions to human beings, positing "a basic affinity between actual and fictional minds when it comes to information processing." Uri Margolin, "Cognitive Science, the Thinking Mind and Literary Narrative," in *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences,* ed. D Herman (Stanford, CA: Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2003), 281. As Ryan explains, "when [readers] experience emotions for the characters, they do not relate to these characters as literary creations nor as 'semiotic constructs', but as possible human beings." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 118. For her, in a novel, we experience–as in VR–"depth of the world," which leads us to presuppose that in the fictional universe, "there is more than what we perceive of the world." Similarly, on a "psychological" level, the reader of a realist or modernist novel makes inferences relating to the characters' inner lives and "reconstructs" the content of their mind (whereas in postmodern texts, "when the reader feels there is nothing beyond

This is why aesthetic illusion is fundamentally a bipolar phenomenon: a "*dominant* experiential immersion" is always counterbalanced by a "*latent*," culturally acquired "awareness of the fictionality of the perceived possible world (objects)."[1623] Like in hypnosis, as Wolf shows, there are two layers in the experience of aesthetic illusion:

> In the background a latent, rational awareness from without, that the illusion-inducing artefact is a mere representation and in the foreground, a mainly intuitive mental simulation where this awareness is *bracketed out* in favor of an imagined experience of represented worlds, from within.[1624]

Furthermore, in the illusory experience, immersion "can be suspended or undermined at any given moment, by the actualization of the latent consciousness of representationality."[1625]

Similarly, as Benson notes in his account of aesthetic absorption, even while I am intensely absorbed, there continues to be a "residual awareness" of myself as a spectator, listener or reader, "an awareness which is a central logical requirement for its being esthetic. Without this implicit awareness of myself as observing, however 'residual,' the distance necessary for aesthetic experience would not be possible."[1626]

From the perspective of the subject, the ambivalence of immersion consists in the perceiver's "transportation to the fictional world *as well as* his or her awareness of fictionality."[1627] Immersion and distance (like referentiality and textuality) are thus not mutually exclusive, and the novel, like hypnosis, can be both simultaneously "true" and illusory.

This principle can apply to the reader's relation to the fictional characters, who are semiotic constructs, and yet may be temporarily related to "as if" they were actual persons. Indeed, "the structure of consciousness can accommodate both an awareness of the characters' status as

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language, inference procedures become largely pointless." Ryan, Ibid., 118. For Lisa Zunshine, we infer the mental states of characters on the basis of the same theoretical knowledge that we apply to others' behavior outside of fiction.[1622] When encountering the fictional universe, representations are turned into meta-representations and acquire "source-tags," which we attributed to them (for example, attributing a given discourse to the narrator or implied author). Once we have bracketed the text as a whole however, we don't attribute tags to every utterance, to preserve cognitive economy. Indeed, we don't need to remind ourselves of the fictionality of each proposition, we are able to "forget" our disbelief, since we acknowledged it in the beginning by attributing the source tag to the work as a whole. See Zunshine, 81. (On the opposite side of the literary theory spectrum, opposing the idea of a continuity between real and fictional minds, one emphasizes the idea that characters are constructs, and that we cannot assume that readers approach them as they would people in ordinary intersubjective relations – see for example Brian McHale's 2012 reappraisal of D. Cohn's *Transparent Minds*. For the question of the "paradox of fiction" and the problem of the reader's affective reactions towards fictional characters, see Colin Radford "How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina?" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 49 (1975): 67-93.

[1623] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 328.

[1624] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion(s)?," 33.

[1625] Ibid., 33.

[1626] Benson, *The Absorbed Self,* 97.

[1627] Koblížek, 2.

artefacts *and* a recognition of an analogy between their mental processes and those of real individuals."[1628] Unlike the duck-rabbit, which we can only be seen under a single aspect at a time,[1629] the reader's stance towards characters can involve a "twofoldness" shared by aesthetic and hypnotic illusions.[1630]

For Murray Smith, twofoldness is part of our natural stance towards characters, especially in realist fiction: "there is no reason to drive a dualistic wedge between mimetic and synthetic [or *configurational*] attitudes, for these attitudes can—in most cases—coexist in our experience of characters. … Readers' consciousness is not limited to a single aspect of the object being considered (character as person or character as artefact)."[1631] Twofoldedness thus "dovetails with the idea that illusion is not delusion," and that "we can talk about characters in mentalistic ways without mistaking them for real people."[1632] This acknowledgment would then destabilize binary oppositions such as absorption vs. theatricality or immersion vs. metafiction, which can perhaps be replaced with the "scalar" model, or spectrum, of aesthetic illusions.[1633]

3.3.2.2. Hypnotic Distance

In hypnosis, distance is also an essential component of the "illusionary" experience. Indeed, modern theories of hypnosis have conceptualized the trance state as involving a certain degree of self-awareness, which does not endanger the immersive aspect of the experience.

One main body of theories consist in the dissociationist and neo-dissociationist models which posit a split between multiple levels of awareness in the subject, that operate separately. In this context, one of them maintains awareness, with varying degrees of latency, throughout the

[1628] Marco Caracciolo, "Reading for the Mind; Aesthetic Illusion, Fictional Characters and the Role of Interpretation," in *Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts,* 123.
[1629] See Gombrich: "all representation relies to some extent on "guided projection'" and "all images" contain an "inherent ambiguity" – an ambiguity which can "never be seen as such." Gombrich, 203; 249.
[1630] Numerous theorists of aesthetic immersion have noted this double aspect. For Felski "even as we are bewitched, possessed, emotionally overwhelmed, *we know ourselves* to be immersed in an imaginary spectacle: we experience art in a state of double consciousness" ... we remain enchanted "without this knowledge diminishing or diluting the intensity of our involvement." Felski, *Uses,* 74. For Furst, the recipient is actively cooperating "in pretense" and "readers can hold a dual standpoint: they exist both fictionally and literally that is they are absorbed in the realm of fiction as if it were real, yet they also remain aware of their actual position as readers of fiction." Furst, *All is True,* 42; 145. Iser also underlines the "dialectic of illusion making and breaking" which creates "a continuous oscillation between involvement and observation" constituting the experience of the text as event. Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 128.
[1631] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*200.
[1632] Caracciolo, "Reading for the Mind," 125.
[1633] Ryan, Ibid., 200.

hypnotic experience.[1634] The most famous of these theories in modern hypnosis is that of the Ernest Hilgard's "hidden observer," coined in 1977, for whom "the observing and participating egos coexist, so that the subject is able to maintain a 'continued limited awareness … that what is perceived as real is in some sense not real."[1635] Indeed, in *Divided Consciousness: Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action*,[1636] Hilgard argues—like Janet—that the "unity of consciousness is illusory,"[1637] and that every individual is made up of and controlled by a multiplicity of "subsystems" which may be more or less dissociated, and are separated by an amnesic barrier.[1638] Hilgard views hypnosis as a "readiness to fractionate the central executive and monitoring system," which creates an internal dissociation from ordinary, planning and reality-testing, cognitive routines: "The modification of controls can be described as dissociative if the usual controls are inoperative."[1639] For Hilgard, the more "dramatic" hypnotic phenomena (such as induced analgesia, deafness, or amnesia) can be understood as dissociative phenomena.

As he argues, in the case of analgesia, a latent awareness of pain seems to remain operative in the subject: "the subject may verbally report no pain (or hearing, or memory) while at another level," "the information may be shown, through such techniques as hypnotic interrogation or automatic writing, to have been registered and stored."[1640] This suggests the presence of a "hidden observer" that remains present, although the conscious subject remains unaware of it. This does not involve personalizing the "hidden observer," as another consciousness—as did Janet, for

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[1634] Hilgard argues that "amnesia and repression may also be articulated in dissociationist terms: information available in the system as a whole may be inaccessible, for whatever reason, to a particular subsystem, consciousness." Matthew H. Erdelyi, "Review of E. Hilgard's Divided Consciousness. Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action." *Science* 200, no. 4342 (May 12, 1978): 655.

[1635] Nell, 212.

[1636] Ernest Hilgard, *Divided Consciousness. Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1977).

[1637] See also Jung's Tavistock Lectures: "The so-called unity of consciousness is an illusion. …We like to think that we are one but we are not." Jung, *The Collected Work*s *of C. G. Jung*, vol 18 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970-1979), 1935.

[1638] This doctrine indeed can be considered as a reformulation of Janet's dissociationist conception, that "in essentials [it] is the old doctrine in new analogic garb, with information-processing metaphors ("systems," "subsystems," "controls," "monitors") tending to supplant the older mentalist concepts ("complexes," "egos," "ideas")…The central experimental weakness of the studies reported on in this book is their direct reliance on verbal reports about the presence or absence of awareness, whether of pain, hearing, or memory, which raises questions about whether one is dealing with cognitive or reporting effects." Erdelyi, 655. See also Sarbin, who in "Hypnosis as a conversation: Believed-in imaginings" states by having a dissociated element in hypnosis, the subject can respond to suggestions with a "*believed-in imagination*" while at the same time observing him or herself as experiencing the hypnotic reality in a more "objective" manner. Theodore Sarbin, "Hypnosis as Conversation. Believed-in Imaginings." *Contemporary Hypnosis* 14, Issue 4 (1997), 203.

[1639] Hilgard, *Divided consciousness*, 227-228.

[1640] Erdelyi, 655.

instance. Indeed, in "Dissociation and Theories of Hypnosis," (1992) Hilgard writes that "the 'hidden observer' was intended merely as a convenient label for the information source capable of a high level of cognitive functioning, not consciously experienced by the hypnotized person."[1641]

Since then, theories of multiple hidden observers have also emerged, and as we saw in Chapter 1, the debate about whether hypnosis is a specific cognitive state or merely a case of psychological-social compliance (also known as the state vs. non-state debate) still divides experimental research today.[1642] Socio-psychological theories of trance as compliance, voluntary role-playing, or "cooperation, also emphasize the "twofoldness" of the hypnotic experience, albeit without having to postulate a split, or dissociation, at the heart of the hypnotic experience.[1643]

Either way, is generally admitted in both—cognitive and socio-psychological—camps that reality-testing is still present in hypnotic trance. In a 1975 study, Orne for example demonstrated that hypnotic hallucination can be experienced as being authentic, while the subject still takes in empirical elements from exterior reality. To illustrate this hypothesis, Orne showed that subjects who were instructed to *simulate* negatively hallucinating a person, bumped into that person, as they believed they 'should' in a hallucinated experience. On the other hand, non-simulating hypnotized subjects, who really 'didn't see' the person, "respectfully an unobtrusively walk[ed] around the person while giving all other appearances of not seeing him."[1644] Therefore, hypnotic subjects remained aware of the reality around them, despite fully adhering to the illusory or "hallucinatory" experience. As Beahrs puts it, one can "hardly imagine a better demonstration of consciousness simultaneously occurring at more than one level."[1645]

[1641] Hilgard, "Dissociation and Theories of Hypnosis," (1992), 77; See E. Fromm and M. Nash, (eds.), *Contemporary Hypnosis Research* (Guilford Press, New York, 1992).

[1642] "A 'third way' in hypnosis research construes hypnosis simultaneously as both a state of (sometimes) profound cognitive change, involving basic mechanisms of cognition and consciousness, and as a social interaction, in which hypnotist and subject come together for a specific purpose within a wider socio-cultural context" Kihlstrom, 2008. See also: "evidence that the rate of hidden observer response (like other hypnotic responses) varies with the wording of instructions does not contradict neodissociation theory; rather, it underscores the fact that hypnosis entails social interaction as well as alterations in conscious awareness." Kihlstrom, "Dissociations and Dissociation Theory in Hypnosis: Comment on Kirsch and Lynn (1998)." In *Psychological Bulletin,* 1., 123 no. 2 (1998): 186.

[1643] Erickson, *Hypnotic Realities*, 269.

[1644] John O. Beahrs, "Understanding Erickson's Approach," in Zeig (ed.), *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1982), 67.

[1645] Ibid. See also Lynn and Rhue, in *Theories of Hypnosis: Current models and perspectives* (New York, Guilford Press, 1991), and Peter Sheehan and Kevin McConkey in *Hypnosis and Experience: The Exploration of Phenomena and Process* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 1982), who also argue that when guided by ethically responsible operators, subjects maintain ability and sufficient awareness to distinguish between reality and fantasy and thus cannot be hypnotized against their will or commit actions against their moral values in the state of hypnosis. Jacob Conn quotes Erickson to argue similarly–as did the physicians of the Salpêtrière–that hypnosis cannot be misused to induce the subject to commit actual wrongful acts: "the only serious risk encountered is incurred by the

It is often noted that illusion, like language, cannot be perceived from without.[1646] This why models which posit multiple layers of experience are helpful to describe both hypnotic dissociation and aesthetic immersion, as in Ryan's account:

> Illusion, like error, is a condition that can be diagnosed only in others, because its recognition requires an external perspective on a personal belief system. In an art experience, illusion is thus a judgment passed by a real-world self on the mental state of a fictional alter-ego—the appreciator's reentered counterpart in the textual world. The same duplicity that diagnoses illusion allows oneself to be immersed and the other to appreciate the vehicle of the experience.[1647]

The "as if" model—as in Walton's concept of make-believe—enables this pivotal contradiction or split which allows an experience to be both illusory and true, simultaneously. Hypnosis, like novelistic fiction—especially realism—walks the tight rope which can conjointly maintain that "all is true" and its opposite.

In older, traditional models, hypnotic experience had to be "detheatricalized" in order to succeed.[1648] Like the realist author, the hypnotist tends to draw the recipient's attention *away* from their—and thus their own—presence, as "the price of this consciousness is an ontological expulsion from the fictional world."[1649] As we saw, hypnotists avoid using the first person excessively to downplay the empirical presence of the operator—and thus the existence of the subject who reacts to the authority of the operator.[1650]

On the contrary, the narrators of pre-realistic and postmodern literature, by "emphasizing their authority," are "ostentatious in reminding the reader of their manipulative powers over the story," and therefore, appear to "break" the aesthetic illusion.

However, once one acknowledges distance as an essential component of aesthetic, hypnotic-novelistic, illusion, one can admit a certain degree of explicit meta-discourse and self-

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hypnotists, in the form of condemnation, rejection and exposure." Jacob H. Conn, "The Myth of Coercion Under Hypnosis," in *Ericksonian Approaches,* 366.

[1646] See Cavell, "an event in which we participate is not knowable apart from our knowledge of our participation in it." Cavell, *The World viewed,* 128. See also: "Though we may be intellectually aware of the fact that any given experience *must* be an illusion, we cannot, strictly speaking, watch ourselves having a illusion." Gombrich, 6.

[1647] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality,* 352. See also Wolf, for whom the principal preconception for aesthetic illusion is "the human ability to mentally dissociate oneself from the here-and-now and imagine being somewhere else or someone else, in some other time" and is "an anthropological constant." Wolf, in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts*, 35.

[1648] See: "Paradoxically, the painting has to 'command' the attention of the beholder," but "it was only by negating the beholder's presence that this could be achieved: only by establishing the fiction of his absence or nonexistence could his … enthrallment by the painting be secured." Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality,* 103.

[1649] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 126. Instead of formulating suggestions with the first person, as in the old model of the Abbé Faria—"Dormez, je le veux" (*Sleep, I demand it*)—the hypnotic speaker effaces himself behind his discourse, as does the Flaubertian imperceptible narrator.

[1650] Koten, in *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts,* 230.

awareness (and thus of acknowledgment of the presence of the "beholder") as non-threatening to the immersive experience. Indeed, as it incorporated a certain degree of "meta-narrative" reflexivity into its practice during the twentieth-century, modern hypnosis underwent a shift similar to the evolution in the history of the novel, from the realist principle of *Celare Artem* to postmodern meta-narrative intrusiveness. Furthermore, just as realist fiction "use[d] contradiction as its pivot instead of denying and bypassing it," hypnosis initially masked *and* acknowledged its illusory dimension, only to later on openly display it more fully, as did Modernist and postmodern literature.[1651]

Indeed, while it was initially founded on the vertical rapport between a subject and an operator who "covers his own tracks,"—by concealing the artificiality of the practice and thus, his own lack of authority—hypnosis evolved into an interactive, aesthetic practice. In this modern form, its style no longer needs to cover its tracks or worry about "breaking" the trance of illusion. By acknowledging the activity of the subject, it no longer needs to protect the illusion of the "power" of the operator at all costs. The "death" of the hypnotic "author" allowed for the integration of a playful use of reflexivity and an open acknowledgment of the conventional nature of the illusion. Unlike the tricks of the magician, knowledge of *how* hypnosis works poses no threat to its efficacy.[1652] Both literary absorption and modern hypnosis undergo the demystification without losing their enchanting and absorptive dimensions, provided that absorption is conceived as voluntary and active, as well an acknowledgment that the experience of mimesis relies on the acceptance of implied and temporarily suspended anti-mimesis.

Not only are modern literature and hypnosis both aware of their absorptive power, they both *play* with the contrast between proximity and distance, using it to their advantage.

A common myth about the trance state is indeed that of its *fragility*, based on the fear that should distraction or self-awareness appear on the part of the subject, the spell would be broken and the hallucinatory experience dissolve, like the fictional world disappears when one puts down a book. On the contrary, in modern hypnosis, a back and forth interplay between absorption and reflexivity is frequently used to *strengthen* the hypnotic induction, in a technique called

1651 Furst, *All is True*, 3.

1652 On the contrary, the notion of a "sophisticated" or "trained" subject implies that repetition and learning increase the intensity and depth of the experience: once a subject knows how to go into trance, the process tends to be greatly accelerated in further experiences.

fractionation.[1653] In this technique, the operator engages in playful alternations between intense immersion and reflexive distance, depending on the position or perspective that they wish the subject to adopt on their own situation.[1654] In modern hypnosis, the trance state is no longer conceived as a fragile illusion that needs to be protected, or a trickery to be concealed. Rather, it is considered as a stable, yes fluctuating and variable state, which the subjects create themselves, from which one may drift in and out freely—and in which the back and forth between 'in' and 'out' is purposefully used to deepen the experience. A similar process occurs in modernist and postmodern texts:

> Shuttled back and forth between ontological levels, the reader comes to appreciate the layered structure of fictional communication, a layered structure through which he is both (in make-believe) narratorial audience in the fictional world, and authorial audience in the real world. … We may call interactivity this switch in perspective from world-internal and immersive to world-external and reflexive. Under this interpretation, periodic de-immersion is essential to the 'tilting game' [*initially Iser's expression*] of interactive reading.[1655]

De-immersion, in that it creates interactivity (as it does in hypnosis) can thus be used to deepen an experience, rather than disrupt it or break its spell. It is also used by hypnotists to create curiosity and motivation in the subject, just as "self-reflexive and interactive reading can be used to enhance the reader's awareness of her desire for immersion by temporarily holding her virtual body out of the textual world."[1656]

[1653] In literature also, the "breaking of illusion" can be the "corollary" of the illusion itself. Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction,"326. Even in realism, as Furst shows about the "diligent narrator in Eliot's *Middlemarch's*" (who directly addresses the reader in formulations such as "you see," "If you want to know more," "You may ask why," and also gives out tasks such as "I will ask you to use your powers of comparison," or produces exhortations to "remember" Eliot, *Middlemarch,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 448; 442; 462; 196; 335, etc.), instead of constituting an obstacle to immersion, interruptions by the narratorial voice can also serve as "a mediating link between text and audience, facilitating the pretense and encouraging slippages between reality and fictional world." Furst, 67. See also Ryan's descriptions, which can be considered as analogical to hypnosis which uses fractionation: "The texts that come the closest to combining both immersion and interactivity are those that orchestrate them in round-robin fashion through a game of in-and-out." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 132. "The most efficient strategy for promoting an awareness of the mechanisms of fictionality is … to engage the reader in a game of in-and-out: now the text captures the reader in the narrative suspense; now it bares the artificiality of the plots; now the text builds up the illusion of an extratextual referent; now it exposes the textual origin of this referent." Ryan, Ibid., 126. See also Wolf: Similarly, "The rational distance implied in aesthetic illusion is not … totally opposed to immersion, but even supports it to some extent: for it is mainly responsible for the paradox that during the operation of aesthetic illusion even unpleasant emotions such as fear and horror can be experienced as pleasurable." Wolf, Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 329.

[1654] The technique in its most rudimentary form consists in having the subject open and close their eyes multiple times, and *pretending* that opening the eyes leads to "coming out" of trance (when in fact open-eye trance is extremely common). The degree of distance and reflexivity incorporated into a hypnotic session will depend on the therapeutic goals and worldview of the subject.

[1655] Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 126.

[1656] Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 355.

The incorporation of distance into the concept of aesthetic illusion therefore allows us to define hypnosis not as pure absorption but once more, as a specific means of directing awareness. This direction—or re-centering—can be either away from the self (absorption) or towards the self (theatricality), and can be used for both therapeutic *and* inductive purposes. The hypnotist can therefore make use of meta-references to strengthen trance, just as the modernist or postmodern novelist can draw attention to textuality without destroying the immersivity of the reading experience—to be distinguished from immersion in the diegetic fictional "world." Indeed, one can find oneself immersed in the act of reading a postmodern text which makes frequent use of meta-textual devices, just as one can be absorbed in the "world" of a realist novel.[1657] In either case, attention is focused on a specific object, whose ontological status is not necessarily central component of the readerly experience.

3.3.2.3. Continuity Between Real and Imaginary Levels

Indeed, one can be immersed in a postmodern text which simultaneously comments on the ongoing process of immersion. Absorption in novelistic worlds thus goes beyond mere psychological identification with the characters or the realist illusion. Indeed, as Eve Sedgwick notes, identification occurs not with character but with style—with the writing, the words themselves. There is a "visceral near-identification … at the level of sentence structure, metrical pattern, rhyme."[1658] In some cases, "engagement with metafictional devices or linguistic patterning can be just as important to the 'immersed' reading experience as engagement with characters or plot."[1659]

A paradigmatic case of a meta-narrative yet immersive text is Julio Cortázar's short story "Continuity of Parks," which Wolf describes as "a metatextual allegory of the potentials of aesthetic illusionism and of its dangers."[1660]

Cortázar's story opens with a short sentence ("He had begun to read the novel a few days before"), which both explicitly illustrates and actively performs the twofold nature mentioned

[1657] See: "The reader of fiction is *always* an actively meditating presence; the text's reality is established by his response and reconstituted by his active participation. The writer of narcissistic fiction merely makes the reader conscious of his experience." Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative. The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1980), 141.
[1658] Quoted in Felski, *Uses,* 63.
[1659] Troscianko, "How Should We Talk About Reading Experience?," 252.
[1660] Julio Cortázar, "Continuity of Parks," in *Bestiary: Selected Stories*, trans. A. Manguel et. al. (London: Harvill Press, 1998), 108-109; Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 344.

higher up.[1661] One the one hand, the metanarrative statement "he had begun to read" underlines the "real" act of reading in a self-reflexive underscoring of the fictional "frame," which is crossed in any narrative opening or *incipit*. On the other hand, the pluperfect and temporal clause "a few days before" strengthen the gap or distinction between Cortázar's short story and the novelistic genre in which the fictional character is absorbed.

The opening of Cortázar's short text contains several elements which we have noted so far, such as the active, voluntary ("allowed himself") and gradual ("slowly growing"; "word by word") dimensions of readerly immersion.[1662] The lexical field of visual arts ("the drawing of characters") is also employed to suggest the visual or pictorial dimension involved in the fleshing out, or rendering-visible, of the fictional characters in the mind's eye. The comfort and isolation involved in the solitary act of reading ("sprawled in his favorite armchair, with his back to the door") then leads to the deepening of absorption, and to the appearance of automatic behavior of the body: "he let his left hand caress once and again the green velvet upholstery," and as well as the automatization of the process as a whole ("without effort his memory retained").[1663]

The specific act of crossing a threshold to enter the fictional world is then exaggerated and emphasized in its sudden dimension, likening the novelistic illusion to hypnotic hallucination: "the illusion took hold of him almost at once." The passive dimension of the expression "taking hold" also evokes the notion of hypnotic "taking over," as seen in Maupassant's text or Poulet's description of reading.

A significant simultaneity then takes place: one the one hand, the pleasure of fictional transportation or recentering is evoked ("the almost perverse pleasure of disengaging himself line by line from all that surrounded him"—the term 'perverse' echoing back to the moralistic and medical traditions that condemn the escapist pleasures of reading fiction). On the other, the character's awareness of his immediate surroundings and bodily sensations *via* proprioceptive and spatial localization does not disappear ("feeling at the same time that his head was relaxing comfortably against the green velvet of the armchair with its high back, that the cigarettes were

[1661] Cortázar, 108.
[1662] Ibid.
[1663] Ibid. The position of the body with the back to the door constitutes an ironic proleptic foreshadowing: the character turns his back to the door *because* he is pursuing immersion ("which would otherwise have bothered him as an irritating possibility for intrusions"), which ironically causes his downfall when the intruder *does* enter through the door.

still within reach of his hand, that beyond the great windows the afternoon air danced under the oak trees in the park").[1664]

The presence of a "hidden observer" of sorts is confirmed as the text ironically distances itself from the content of the fictional novel, which is described as "the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine."[1665] Yet, at the same time, there is a quasi-hallucinatory dimension ("letting himself go toward where the images came together and took on color and movement"), activated especially in the strong spatiality (transportation to "where"), passivity ("letting himself"), visual ("images"; "color") and kinetic dimensions ("movement") of the text's descriptions, which create a shift from immersion in a static landscape to immersion in a moving, quasi-virtual, reality.[1666]

A sense of being present in, of inhabiting the fictional world, is strengthened by the description of the diegetic character as being located *in* the hypodiegetic scene: "he was witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin."[1667] After being rapidly "escorted" through the main lines of the hypodiegetic story within Cortázar's text, we then are suddenly and ironically brought *out* of its plot-level, back into the realm of our own "reading."

Therefore, we are made gradually aware of the fictionality and textuality of both texts, via the ironic "contamination" of the outer narratorial level by the vocabulary of the hypodiegetic novel: "A lustful, yearning dialogue raced down the pages like a rivulet of snakes."[1668] Furthermore, the mention of the "pages" and the reference to novelistic necessity ("one felt it had all been decided from eternity") broadens the ironic gap which underlines the fictionality and artificial dimension of the story. After the paragraph break, however, we are reimmersed into the world of the novel. Although this can only be known retrospectively, the pronoun "he"—which up until now designated the diegetic character-reader—now refers to the hypodiegetic hero of the fictional novel ("He went up the three porch steps and entered").[1669]

Here the story has operated a blurring or quasi inversion of the perspectives from which it is told, and of the internal and external diegetic levels. Indeed, the character-reader is now perceived from the outside as "a man," by the hero-character: "the high back of an armchair

[1664] Ibid.
[1665] Ibid.
[1666] Ibid.
[1667] Ibid.
[1668] Ibid.
[1669] Ibid., 109.

covered in green velvet, the head of the man in the chair reading a novel."[1670] The final murder thus creates a loop which allows the "fictional" diegetic world to—violently and destructively—intrude and act upon the world of the "character-reader."[1671]

Our surprise as "real" readers, then, is a sign that the text has successfully made us aware of our own absorption, our immersive naivety—the very same which led the character-reader to his death. By underlining our own lack of awareness, it makes us aware of the power of narrative language, both of its dangers (through the evocation of violence and vulnerable, suggestible readers) and of its ability to instruct and draw attention to its own absorptive paradoxes.[1672] This knowledge is experiential, in that it is necessary to have first been tricked to experience the surprise and subsequent reflection which it triggers. The experience is aesthetic, in that its medium is poetic and hypnotic, and uses evocation to both guides and trick us, manipulating us into becoming aware of our own responsibility and freedom during the whole process. Indeed, while reading, we voluntarily engaged in the experience of letting ourselves be tricked, having committed to do so when we accepted the readerly contract.

The ending of Cortázar's story thus relies on the lingering dimension of the aesthetic illusion, which is still operative while it has simultaneously been exposed as such. As Wolf notes, the final conclusion must be drawn by the recipient:

> as its terminal metalepsis, the paradoxical suggestion that the diegetic reader is killed by the hero of the hypodiegetic novel the reader is about to finish, is not actually narrated but exists only in the real recipient's imagination after he has read the last words of the story.[1673]

In Cortázar's metafictional demonstration of the workings of readerly immersion, the result is ambivalent, "as it elicits such illusion within the fictional world and, to a certain extent, also in the real reader, but eventually lays it bare as a problematic, perhaps even dangerous effect."[1674] As with hypnosis, it is precisely from this rich, multilayered ambivalence that awareness can emerge.[1675]

[1670] Ibid.

[1671] As Ryan puts it, in the grips of intense aesthetic illusion, the reader-character ends up "paying with his life the disappearance of the boundary between fiction and reality." Ryan, "Immersion vs. Interactivity," 120.

[1672] Such instruction is similar to that of hypnosis in that it relies on the pedagogical value inherent to the act of *telling a story* rather than different forms—that of the essay, or pedagogic manual, for example.

[1673] Wolf, "Aesthetic Illusion as an Effect of Fiction," 327.

[1674] Ibid. 327.

[1675] See Iser: "As we are absorbed into an image we are no longer present in a reality … we are experiencing … an irrealization," which when it is over "when we put the book down" makes us "experience a kind of awakening," to a reality "from which we have been drawn away by the image building process. …The fact that we have been temporarily isolated from the real world means "that for a brief moment the real world appears observable." Also,

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In this section, I analyzed the "inductive" dimension of hypnosis and literature, drawing out some of the "literary" aspects of hypnotic discourse. These include musicality and poeticity, suggestiveness and metaphoricity of discourse, as well as fictionality and the active cooperation of the subject. The "literary" tools of hypnosis (stories, symbols, metaphors, indirect and therefore suggestive formulations, play on rhythm, tone, etc.) are used by operators to create and amplify aesthetic immersion and absorption. However, as I argued, a residual distance or latent awareness always remains in the experience of immersive recentering, whether in novel reading or in hypnotic hallucination. Immersion and distance are not incompatible, but rather essential components of the aesthetic experience, and the back and forth between them is a key component of the esthetic competency of the subject. In *The Woman Reader,* Flint concludes her reading of Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out,* with a comment that captures this idea:

> Acknowledgment of the degree to which an individual can get absorbed by fiction is coupled … with a recognition (which the reader is expected to share) that such habits of identification, of slipping into the skin and mind of a fictional character, can go hand in hand with self-awareness of the process which is taking place.[1676]

In modern theories of hypnosis, not only is it admitted that the subject maintains self-awareness and can exit the hypnotic "state" as easily as one puts down a book, self-reflexive devices are also used to create a back and forth between immersion and distance, to create a more compelling experience.

In modernity, both literary absorption and hypnosis thus undergo a similar process of demystification without losing their enchanting immersive powers. In both hypnotic and novelistic discourse, sophisticated forms of attention and sensitivity to language and its aesthetic-performative effects are mobilized, rather than the mere dulling of the subject's intellect and deception on the part of the operator. Rather than a "cognitive mistake of some kind," in both

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"image building eliminates the subject object division essential for all perception, so that when we 'awaken' to the real world, this division seems all the more accentuated. Suddenly we find ourselves detached from our world, to which we are inextricably tied, and able to perceive it as an object." This detachment, even if momentary, then "may enables to apply the knowledge we have gained … so that we can view our own world as a thing 'freshly understood." Iser, 140.

[1676] Flint, *The Woman Reader,* 273. For Flint, "reading well" does not consist in becoming a "passive being, unthinking losing oneself in a story." Ibid. On the contrary, "the ability to read literature carefully is equated… with the ability to read life. This attention which is demanded on the part of the reader … goes some way towards giving the lie to the dangerously uncritical mindlessness which so many critics chose to present as being induced by the opiate of sensation fiction." Flint, 293. We would contend that a similar claim can be made about hypnotic experience.

hypnosis and literature, the aesthetic illusion creates "a strong affective impression of one's direct participation," which is a sign of aesthetic competency rather than cognitive delusion.[1677]

As I hope to have shown, immersivity—rather than mimesis or referentiality—is thus the key component to the aesthetic illusion, achieved by the poetic "trickery" that we outlined in this chapter.[1678] Whereas "truthfulness is posited as the overarching convention of realism; it is not however, a literal truthfulness, in the sense of a faithful imitation of a prior reality, but rather, it produces "an 'air of reality,' the verbal and textual production of an impression of truth."[1679]

In this sense, in both hypnosis and novel reading, "all is true within the frame of pretense evoked by narration."[1680] In felicitous hypnotic discourse, "all is true" within the frame of the subject's experience. And yet, neither field can do without "an oblique avowal of its stylized nature."[1681]

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"Enchantment," as Felski writes, is traditionally "the antithesis and enemy of criticism."[1682] In this chapter I hope to have shown that on the contrary, enchanted and immersive reading, like trance, rather than merely "dull consciousness," can also "tighten it."[1683] Provided that it is followed by a return to reality, the enjoyment and experience of esthetic enchantment *reinforces,* rather than dissolves, our ability to distinguish reality and fantasy. Fantasy, in this sense, helps us navigate reality in more efficient ways.[1684] In Chapter 4, I will draw out the value—both therapeutic and ethical—of immersive and fictional narratives.

[1677] Martin Pokorny, "Illusion, Distance and Appropriation," in *The Aesthetic Illusion*, 153.
[1678] Indeed, science fiction of fantasy are also illusory.
[1679] Furst, *All is True,* 173.
[1680] Ibid. See also: "the success of a work of art may be measured by the degree to which it produces" an illusion: "that illusion makes it appear to us for the first time that we have lived another life— that we have had a miraculous enlargement of experience." Henry James, in *Theory of Fiction,* ed. James E. Miller, Jr. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 93.
[1681] Furst, Ibid., 173.
[1682] Felski, *Uses,* 56. To be absorbed or worse, enchanted is "to be rendered impervious to critical thought, to lose one's head and one's wits, to be seduced by what one sees rather than subjecting it to sober and level-headed scrutiny." Felski, Ibid.
[1683] Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 9.
[1684] See Cavell: "It is a poor idea of fantasy which takes it to be a world apart from reality, a world clearly showing its unreality. Fantasy is precisely what reality can be confused with. It is through fantasy that our conviction of the worth of reality is established; to forgo our fantasies would be to forgo our touch with the world." Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 85. See also Ernest Hilgard (1956): the parent who tells a child tales of ghosts and castles and brings the child safely back to the ordinary ("from the animistic to the objective world") is in fact creating a lifelong openness to fantasy and

Chapter 4. What Can Literature Do? The Therapeutic and Ethical Value of Narratives

Just as novels have a different way of conveying "truths" than do philosophical texts, hypnosis has a different way of conveying therapeutic messages than more cognitively oriented forms of therapy. In this chapter, I will underline some of the ways in which novels and hypnosis share common ways of affecting their recipients and, in this sense, of "doing" something in the world. More specifically, I will argue that a common process of "unselfing" can be found in both hypnosis and novel reading, an aesthetic-ethical process which stems from specifically narrative ways of thinking and looking at the world, and which is both therapeutically and ethically valuable.

While the previous chapter focused on the inductive power of narratives, here I turn to their transformative effects on the recipient. In this way, I move from how narratives draw us in, to what they draw out in us. Because it centers on the therapeutic and ethical value of stories, this chapter is inscribed in the tradition of the defense of mimesis and poetic discourse in the good life.[1685] Grounded in the framework of narrative ethics, it underlines the similarities between what literary and hypnotic modes of narration *do* in the world when they bring about beneficial transformations in the individual.[1686] As I argue, this requires a non-dramatic conception of hypnotic storytelling, which is rarely found in the history of medicine and psychoanalysis. My contention here is that

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thereby strengthening the ability to distinguish reality from fantasy: "the path to the other world is well worn, the entrance and exit swift and safe." For Hilgard this ability then leads to greater hypnotic susceptibility. Conversely, a confused notion of the status of fantasy (fairies are real, you're just not noticing them) might lead to a life in which "the door to other worlds will be kept firmly closed." In Nell, 55. So the development of reality testing implies creating a safe and well-trodden path from reality to fantasy and back again: flexibility.). The fears and anxieties that (still) surround hypnosis recall those that appeared with the rise of the novel. In both cases however, the power is not in the 'authority' of a controlling or corruptive mind, but rather, in the subject's ability to *pay attention to* its objects, to examine them deeply, which–rather than stultified blindness–is the essence of both hypnotic and novelistic awareness.

[1685] See Aristotle, *Poetics,* 1448 b5, and Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1990). This chapter proposes a conception of the good life in which the wellbeing of the self and of others are not only compatible but contribute equally to *eudemonia*. Framing therapy as an ethical attitude toward the self, it reinscribes therapeutic care into the long tradition of *Souci de soi*. See Michel Foucault, "La culture de soi" in *Histoire de la sexualité, III, Le Souci de soi* (Paris : Gallimard, 1984) and *L'herméneutique du sujet. Cours au collège de France, 1981-1982.* (Paris : Gallimard, 2001).

[1686] Here I broadly follow Booth's definition of ethical criticism as "any effort to show how the virtues of narratives relate to the virtues of selves and societies, or how the ethos of any story affects or is affected by the ethos—the collection of virtues—of any given reader." Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 11.

hypnosis is at heart a *narrative* form of therapy, a claim which justifies my comparison between hypnotherapy and the novel, rather than theatrical or poetic form. As most modern hypnotherapy is solution-oriented, it is often less concerned with causal explanation of symptoms than with the exploration of alternative possibilities, which is to say, of other, imagined lives. Hence, what sets hypnosis apart from other therapeutic models is what brings it closer to the novelistic imagination. As both lead the reader-subject to imaginatively project their center of experience into that of other beings and situations,[1687] they mobilize a mode of imagining that redirects the attention away from narrow, aspect-blind narratives, toward the possibility and reality of *other lives.*[1688] Whereas most therapeutic approaches that focus on "re-authoring" or "restorying" the client's narrative do so from a detached, exterior perspective, hypnotherapy, as we saw in Chapter 3, leads the subject to inhabit imaginary situations or lives from within—as if they were actual and in an immersive manner—much like the reader is led to shift between various situated and experiential points of view presented in the novel. Hypnotic-imaginative access to this first-person, phenomenological perspective—which preserves the possibility of another, more detached third-person point of view—is intimately linked to the ethical value of the novel.

My argument here is that this double position, produced in both fiction and hypnotic dissociation, creates temporary acts of unselfing, of imaginative "becoming other," which, thanks to the process of re-centering, help us become other in actuality. Drawing on ethical criticism and contemporary moral philosophy that emphasizes the primacy of moral vision and attention, I aim to show that the modes of attending and becoming-other that hypnotherapy shares with novelistic aesthetics contribute to its value, both therapeutic and ethical.

A study of hypnotic storytelling stresses the importance of the inner life as well as the non-rational, unconscious or affective aspects which determine and constitute it, and transpire in one's outer actions. Indeed, unlike what is portrayed in the direct suggestions of authoritative hypnotherapies of the late nineteenth-century, hypnotic change occurs not merely at the level of behavior but first and foremost at that of worldview. Although these psychological aspects were discarded with the linguistic turn in literary criticism and moral philosophy of the twentieth century, they deserve to be reexamined as they enrich our conception both of narratives and their

[1687] See Benson's concept of recentering, described in the general Introduction.
[1688] Which is to say, the lives of others (whether actual individuals or fictional characters), and "other" possible or alternative life paths, for the individual.

reception, bridging the gap between texts and the empirical individuals who read them. As Maria Antonaccio points out, "a return to moral psychology would allow ethicists to give more sustained theoretical attention to the crucial question of the formation of consciousness in increasingly complex cultural circumstances."[1689] For her, this is especially necessary "in an age which is witnessing the astounding proliferation of images by electronic and other media."[1690] As she argues, "what we need are new pictures of the soul, and new forms of critical analysis to evaluate the process whereby human beings create pictures of themselves and come to resemble the picture."[1691] As I will suggest in this chapter, the study of modern hypnosis informed by ethical literary criticism provides a "picture of the soul" which posits that change occurs at the level of internal representations, and consists in "becoming the picture" which we have fictionally and imaginatively formed of ourselves.

Furthermore, unlike behavioral and cognitive therapeutic models, hypnosis relies strongly on eliciting interior responses in the client, which are both immersive and affective, to instigate change. Although this affective component of hypnotherapy is still often reduced to the abreactive release found in the cathartic model that originated with Freud and Breuer, in this chapter I will show that catharsis is but *one* of many ways in which hypnotherapy uses the emotional responses of the subject for therapeutic purposes. Whereas catharsis involves the dramatic acting out and abreaction of trauma, modern hypnotherapy also makes use of gentler, narratively oriented ways of providing emotional release and integration, which do not involve the reexperiencing, *in statu nascendi,* of a pathogenic memory. The affective responsiveness that occurs in this case, as I hope to show, is similar to that which can occur in reading fiction.

Indeed, just as modern hypnotherapy presupposes that emotional responses are essential for the implementation of therapeutic change, in the conception of reading which I put forth here, the emotional responsiveness of the reader is an essential part of the understanding of the fictional work. As David Novitz has shown, only with immersive, imaginative, and affective involvement in the fictional world can one "notice and appraise vital aspects of the work" which would otherwise go unnoticed.[1692] Such types of engagement are essential to comprehending the *nature*

[1689] Maria Antonaccio, "Picturing the Soul: Moral Psychology and the Recovery of the Emotions," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 4, no. 2, Cultivating Emotions (June 2001): 139.
[1690] Ibid., 139.
[1691] Ibid.
[1692] David Novitz, "The Beholder's Share," in *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1987), 80.

of fictionality itself, so that "any response to a fictional work that prevents emotional involvement must also preclude a full understanding."[1693] Hypnotic narratives require and cultivate an affective-imaginative response without which transformative experience cannot take place. Indeed, like fiction, they affect the emotional and unconscious mechanisms that determine the individual's conscious content.[1694] In both cases, change does not stem exclusively from content-based or propositional insight, but requires the mobilization of non-rational faculties as well.

Although hypnotic narratives show that stories impact the *whole* self, they do so from within a non-suspicious paradigm, considering the unconscious as an ally with whom it is possible to communicate through narrative material, without having to engage in forms of paranoid or symptomatic reading.[1695] Just as the "meanings" or "lessons" of literature are rarely made explicit in the text, hypnosis, unlike cognitive and insight-based therapeutic models that mobilize the client's conscious awareness and analytic capacities, remains efficacious even when focused solely on the "manifest content" brought to the session. It works directly on the level of primary process thinking, symbolic images, linguistic formulations, representations, etc., without having to uncover their latent significance, or "paraphrasable content."[1696] Furthermore, neither novelists nor hypnotic operators offer explicit solutions or guidelines—interpretations, maxims, rules—to be transposed at a practical level, which underlines the acknowledgment and value of ambiguity, present in these discourses, for the ethical life. In both novels and hypnotherapy, particular

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[1693] Ibid., 87.

[1694] See for example Derek Attridge's description of moral change that emerges from literary encounters as a "conversion event" further down.

[1695] "The spirit of the hermeneutics of suspicion has made us believe that to read critically is necessarily to debunk, deconstruct, down, not to praise and admire. … How can we read philosophically without reducing the text to a witting or unwitting illustration of a preexisting theory? ... A critic who proceeds in this manner may easily come to look guileless, as if she hadn't heard of the sophisticated concepts on display in the work of the masters of suspicious critique. To be willing to learn from the work requires a critic capable of a certain degree of humility." Moi, "The Adventure of Reading," 127; 132. See also A. K. Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You" from *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

[1696] Similarly, paraphrases of fictional works will generally not do justice to the complexity of their multi-layered evocative meanings. The ability to engage with fantasy material is of course central to psychoanalysis. However, in hypnotherapy, insight need not be brought to the fore to enable new understandings. As Leon Chertock observes, it can even be conducted in complete silence, with almost no knowledge of the client's story, using ideomotor phenomena to formally "symbolize" aspects of the problem while leaving their content unmentioned, or even letting the work develop internally and silently in the trance state, without the therapist intervening or accessing the content, which remains unnamed and unformulated. Chertock calls this process "hypnose sèche" ("dry hypnosis"). Léon Chertock, in *Mémoires d'un hérétique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1990), 227. Roustang notes how this "laisser-faire" and automatism force the therapist to face the superfluous dimension of her intervention and thus the affective, countertransferential consequences of her own limitations: "Only by returning to her own impotence will she be able to overcome her impatience and invent new outcomes." Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?* 144.

problems are represented and given concrete and aesthetic form, rather than solved. It is from the experience of interacting with the fictional world and the modes of *looking* which it encourages, that change can emerge. As moral philosophers such as Iris Murdoch and Martha Nussbaum suggest, the ethical or therapeutic message is to be located mostly in the capacities of attention that literary discourse evoke and elicit, in the values which they interrogate and mobilize, rather than in any content one might extract from them. In both novels and hypnosis, therapeutic and ethical messages, if they exist, are not explicitly formulated but rather, are *expressed* by fictional narrative in the same way that a person is expressive in their gestures, that is, in the very *suggestive* nature of their discourse and being.[1697]

In this sense, we can envision a rehabilitation of the cognitive potential of the imagination, which is the language of the unconscious as conceived in modern hypnotherapy. In "Fiction and the Growth of Knowledge," David Novitz reminds us of how empiricism, as a heritage of the Enlightenment, dismissed the imagination as a source of error:

> Perhaps the most obvious legacy of the Enlightenment is the widely held belief that empirical science alone can furnish us with useful knowledge about the world. Any claim to knowledge which is not based on, or amenable to, scientific enquiry is generally regarded as … a kind of quackery to be shunned by all who are not simple-minded or superstitious. … On this view… the fanciful imagination turns out to be no more than a source of error which, if relied on, will lead to the total destruction of human nature.[1698]

On the contrary, immersive and projective imagining have a determining role in an ethics of restorying.[1699] I propose, however, a non-sentimental, non-Romantic response to dismissals of the

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[1697] James O. Young, argues that a literary text can provide knowledge by carrying out "illustrative demonstrations," which, rather than give arguments, "*place* people in a position where they can recognize the truth of a proposition." Young, "Literature, Representation and Knowledge," in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature. An Analytic Approach,* ed. D. Davies and C. Matheson (Peterborough, ONT: Broadview Press, 2008), 367. Here, Young adopts a Wittgensteinian position in which "adopting a position" is a form of aspect-seeing: **"**One can think of a perspective as an interpretation of some object or objects. An archaeologist, for example, may look at a piece of flint and see it as—interpret it as—a hand axe. The non-archaeologist may see the same artefact as a non-descript rock." Thus, while they have no truth value in themselves, perspectives "are one step away from containing truths," as they can "assist people in acquiring" either true or false beliefs. If novels or hypnotic narratives provide knowledge, it is by gesturing, by showing "not directly, but by means of representations" what adopting a given perspective might look like. For Young, even if "a suggestion or a gesture … does not prove anything by itself," once we have "reinterpreted" our experience by "using the perspective of the novel," its rightness can then "become apparent" or not. Young, Ibid., 368; 367; 372.

[1698] Novitz, "Fiction and the Growth of Knowledge," in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2008), 343. Novitz goes on: "We are already acquainted with the romantic reaction to all of this, and we have seen how easily it tumbles into an untenable idealism." Ibid. Our response will thus have to be non-Romantic.

[1699] Here, the expression "projective imagination" merely designates the process by which the subject imagines herself as projecting her "center of experience" into another's perspective, rather than the Kleinian concept of "projective identification" described in "Notes on some schizoid mechanisms," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 27 (1946): 97-110.

cognitive potential of the imaginary. I suggest that fictional narratives are "laboratories" where other modes of seeing the world can be explored, including those which do not fit one's values or elicit empathetic responses in the subject. This capacity to inhabit other lives can be transferred into actuality but does not imply that the individual must adhere to the worldview which they temporarily inhabit. Imaginative becoming-other teaches us, not by inculcating specific messages—on the mode of direct suggestion, or of the didactic—but by revealing how being emerges from seeing, and from the internal acts of narration upon which seeing is constructed.

A comparative study of hypnotic and literary imagination shows that the narrative dimension of our inner lives illuminates the relations between interiority and outer action, stressing the importance of fictional and vicarious experience in the constitution and direction of attention in actual life. In other words, if hypnosis and the novel change the individual, it is because their form, not their content, teaches us new aesthetic-ethical modes of looking at and relating to the world. The novelistic genre is thus especially relevant in the examination of therapeutic-ethical concerns. In fact, its complex temporality is a better match for the longer process of therapeutic change than shorter genres, and illuminates the therapeutic potential of the double, internal-external positioning occurring in hypnotic dissociation. It also allows a freedom of movement, not just in space but also in *time,* analogous to the process in which hypnotic subjects are invited to "regress" to a previous life event or imaginatively "project" into a future one.[1700] Furthermore, the suggestive ambiguity of novelistic prose—as opposed to the essay form, for instance—matches the evocative and indirect communication of modern permissive hypnosis, described in Chapter 3. In both novels and hypnosis, any transformation which occurs is not imposed on the subject but allowed to emerge naturally, a process which rehabilitates automatism as a creative capacity.

Before we begin our examination of the therapeutic value of narratives in hypnosis, one possible objection to the comparison between novels and therapeutic change deserves special mention.[1701] In its contemporary, postmodern form—characterized by heavy disillusionment regarding the existence of a psychological self, a knowable reality, and the possibility of linguistic

[1700] And indeed, "the possibility of following a character over time makes narrative a natural and perhaps even necessary companion for moral thought." Nora Hämäläinen, *Literature and Moral Theory* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2017), 34.

[1701] Other objections we can anticipate are the unsuitability of evocative, ambiguous content to convey clearly identifiable pedagogical messages, the extension of novelistic temporality as opposed to the circumscribed therapeutic encounter, the profoundly relational nature of psychotherapy as opposed to reading as a silent, private process, and the descriptive, even conservative, dimension of literary realism as opposed to self-transformation.

representation—the novel might indeed seem especially *unsuited* for illuminating the psychological self, let alone the therapeutic setting. In *Doubling the Point*, for example, J.M. Coetzee describes contemporary novelists as "children shut in the playroom, the room of textual play, looking out wistfully through the bars at the enticing world of the grownups, one that we have been instructed to think of as the mere phantasmal world of *realism* but that we stubbornly can't help thinking of as the *real.*"[1702] This aesthetic skepticism is echoed in contemporary psychotherapy, where the dissolution of psychological realism by the postmodern framework no longer permits positing the existence of an unquestionable "unitary, enduring and private" self at the core of individuality.[1703] Although in the realism still characteristic of the "modernist" era, the self might be "hidden, disguised, or obscured … neglected and warped in the course of development," it can nevertheless always be "reached and by patient work, restored."[1704]

Like the novel, psychotherapy in the twenty-first century can no longer ignore the linguistic, constructed, and thus narrative dimension of its object of study, as Alan Parry and Robert Doan argue in *Story Re-visions. Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World* (1994).[1705] Indeed, in the post-positivistic eclecticism which characterizes psychotherapy today, most theoretical models have taken into consideration the importance of narrativity, as I show in Appendix B. This "narrative turn" in psychotherapy makes it impossible to return to the "modernist" paradigm to which Freud belonged according to Perry and Doan.[1706] As I will argue, hypnotic narratives should be understood in light of this theoretical shift, as they are founded on the very acknowledgment and manipulation of autosuggestions, and thus narrativity, at the heart of individual identity. Whether the ability to narrate our lives is an innate tendency as it is for

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[1702] Coetzee, in J. M. Coetzee and David Attwell, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 63.

[1703] Haim Omer and Nahi Alon, *Constructing Therapeutic Narratives* (Northvale, N.J: Jason Aronson, 1997), 223. See also Appendix.

[1704] Omer and Alon, *Constructing Therapeutic Narratives*, 223.

[1705] Similarly, as Coetzee asks in *The Good Story:* "Are all autobiographies, all life-narratives, not fictions, at least in the sense that they are constructions (fictions from Latin *fingere,* to shape or mould or form)?" J. M. Coetzee, *The Good Story*, 3. See also: "what we call the truth is only a shifting self-reappraisal." Coetzee, *Doubling the Point,* 392.

[1706] Parry and Doan define modernism in psychotherapy as "the last attempt to preserve the sacred and mythic narratives of the Western tradition," its "epistemological hangover" being the assumption that "with understanding, with knowing, comes freedom." Alan Parry and Robert Doan, *Story Re-visions. Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World* (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 1994), 11; 23. For them, Freud is a modernist in that he still works with the notion of a "real" self and adheres "to the faith that if his patients probed deeply enough they would *find* the answers they were looking for in the unconscious," which once restored to consciousness, would put an end to pathological "interferences and resulting distortions" and restore patients' perceptions to "once again correspond to reality as it was" (8). In this sense, "to the extent that therapists of any school continue to operate within assumptions of single-selfhood and its essential knowability, they remain steadfastly within a modernist sensibility." Ibid., 13.

Jerome Bruner,[1707] or whether we are "spoken into existence" as Rom Harré contends,[1708] the narrative mode of organization of human experience is at the heart of modern hypnotherapy's conception of human consciousness. A study of hypnosis illuminated by literary theory shows that fictional narratives, whether novelistic or therapeutic, can teach us ways to attain self-understanding and self-transformation, even in this context of deconstructed identities and of "scepticism about the cognitive power of literature."[1709]

While it mobilizes aspects of the narrative identity thesis[1710] and responds to critics that reduce self-narration to "distorting the past" or "taking one further away from accurate self-understanding," this defense of the cognitive and ethical dimensions of fictional narration and our emotional responses to it does not amount to an ethics of sensibility or of wishful thinking.[1711] Rather, it uses the terms "ethics" and "cognition" in an extended sense. Indeed, it rehabilitates non-rational means of knowledge acquisition, while widening the scope of the ethical beyond the narrow moralistic sense, situating the ethical in all aspects of everyday life, rather than limiting it to a circumscribed, separate domain of existence.[1712] Furthermore, it eschews the types of readings

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[1707] For Bruner, there exists in humans an "innate" or "primitive disposition" to organize experience narratively, which is then supplemented by the individual's culture with its various traditions of telling and interpreting. Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 80. Bruner's work has been described as a Kantian revolution in this respect: "Just as Kant attempted to show that the world was fixed and lawful, not by nature, but because our mental apparatus makes it so, Bruner argues that narratives are not merely implements by which we describe a pre-existing orderly reality, but the very tools by which reality is ordered. Therefore, it is not disparaging to say that the self is a tale." Omer and Alon, 226.

[1708] For Rom Harré, language games and forms of life create our sense of self: "one who is always presented as a person, by taking over the conventions through which this social act is achieved, becomes organized as a self." Harré, *Personal Being*, 106. As seen in Chapter 3, Benson explains that "the sequence of pronominal development suggests a progression from public social being to more private personal being (mine—me—I)." Benson, 133. Significant for our purposes further on, for Charles Taylor the self is also instituted by our frameworks of value, by what we deem "good," by the act of "taking a stand" and knowing "where I stand." Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 27.

[1709] Alice Crary, "Coetzee's Quest for Reality," in *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 127. With this expression, Crary is not thinking of poststructuralist or deconstructionist critiques of selfhood, but of twentieth-century Anglo-American analytic philosophy's criticism of the truth value of literary texts, according to which "literature qua literature cannot immediately inform our understanding of the world," that "it is 'not "truth-telling" in any straightforward sense'." Ibid. See Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 440.

[1710] See Paul Ricoeur, conclusion of *Temps et Récit* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983-1985): "Without the concept of narration, the problem of personal identity is condemned to an insoluble antinomy: either one posits a subject which is identical to itself in all the diversity of its states, or one contends, as did Hume and Nietzsche, that this identical subject is but a substantialist illusion." Ricoeur, 355, our translation. See also *Soi-Même Comme un Autre*, 199-201.

[1711] Galen Strawson, "Against Narrativity." *Ratio* 18, no. 4 (December 2004): 428; and: "About every story we can legitimately ask, *qui bono?"* Coetzee, *The Good Story,* 60.

[1712] Here, I follow Murdoch and Diamond's idea that any delineation of the field of ethics, whether "implicit or explicit," already reflects "substantial moral views," including the "neutral" attempts and "linguistic" method of mid-twentieth-century analytic philosophy. Cora Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 38, No.

which reduce literary texts to mere illustrative examples, or impose theoretical-philosophical interpretive frameworks onto them, neglecting the specificity of their form. In this sense, defending the ethical value of literature is not a matter of producing moralistic interpretations or casuistry, but of drawing out the specific ways in which literature teaches us to look at the world.

By drawing on these seemingly unrelated fields, this chapter thus makes apparent how post-Wittgensteinian moral particularists[1713] and modern hypnotherapists in Ericksonian branches present similar, anti-theoretical challenges to the "mother" disciplines from which they emerged and whose conceptual framework they reject (namely contemporary moral and analytic philosophy on the one hand, and positivist, neurobiological, or even classic analytic models of the mind on the other).[1714] Both reject systematizations, generalizations, and other "metaphysical" solidifications which obscure the particular and shifting complexity of reality. Instead, both redirect awareness to our preexisting evaluative frameworks and the ways in which these shield us from perceiving reality in all of its specificity. By insisting on the singularity of unique cases and on the importance of non-essentializing stances, both indicate, as Cora Diamond puts it, that "theory can't do the work for us."[1715]

From within this framework, I will show that the content and the direction of *attention* constitute the foundation of both hypnotherapeutic change and of the ethical life. In order to do so,

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1, Ethics (Spring 2010): 53. For Diamond, the question of the boundaries of the ethical field should not be settled once and for all: "the 'domain of moral philosophy' isn't something that can cease to be problematic." Ibid., 52.

[1713] This branch of moral philosophy was pioneered by Peter Winch, then developed by Cora Diamond, Raimond Gaita, Martha Nussbaum, as well as Murdoch, although the latter is difficult to neatly categorize. Just like hypnotherapists consider that hypnotic processes and structures permeate the entirety of everyday life, the particularist post-Wittgensteinians agree on the impossibility of circumscribing the field of ethics and eschew systematic theorizing at the meta-ethical level. Hämäläinen, *Literature and Moral Theory*, 64. Thus, they mostly limit the role of the moral philosopher to that of investigating particular examples: "All we can do… is to look at particular examples and see what we *do* want to say about them; there are no general rules which can determine in advance what we must say about them." Peter Winch, *Ethics and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1972), 182. Rorty and Diamond adopt more anti-theoretical stances, rejecting systematization and theoretical generalization in the domain of ethics altogether. However, as Nora Hämäläinen specifies, particularism does not necessarily exclude all forms of normativity, which can also "designate a level of philosophical evaluation/judgment still operative even at the level of the particular," and "provide guidance by means of narratives and situation bound considerations in relation to particular cases." Hämäläinen, 66. In this sense, it merely shows "the complexity of specific cases, the plurality in outcomes." Ibid, 66. Among these thinkers who have argued for the integration of literature into the field of moral philosophy, I will pay attention especially to those who are sympathetic to the examination of the individual's worldview and inner life as ethically relevant, thereby extending the domain of moral thought beyond the narrow boundaries of behavioral or deontological ethics.

[1714] As Nora Hämäläinen has noted, the "ethics-literature discussion" has led to a renegotiation of the boundaries of both literature and moral philosophy, instituting a renewed "openness to things beyond the main target of the discipline—in the case of literary theory toward the world outside the text and in the case of moral philosophy toward things that may not be expressive in terms of systematic moral theory." Hämäläinen, 7.

[1715] Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," 780.

I will use Iris Murdoch's concept of moral attention—which she borrows from Simone Weil—to illuminate shared aspects of hypnotherapy, novelistic texts and moral philosophy. Indeed, hypnosis and the novel share a common process in which the attention is invited to turn away from the self and its neurotic or egoic narratives, and toward the lives—and stories—of others. For Murdoch, this process of "unselfing," which is a central component of artistic reception, is essential to the good life. As I would like to show, it can be found both in hypnosis and novel reading, and is valuable not just ethically, but also therapeutically.

In this chapter, after setting up a framework in which hypnosis can be reconceptualized as a form of narrative—rather than merely dramatic or cathartic—therapy, I will propose two ways in which this therapeutic "unselfing," which is embedded in narrative modes of thinking and looking at the world, can be understood. First of all, it is the "unselfing" that occurs when hypnotic-novelistic narration redirects the subject's attention away from the self and its habitual narratives, toward alternative modes of apprehending reality. This first mode, I call "immersive restorying," and explore in Section 4.2. The second form of "unselfing," then, is one in which the attention, having been directed outwards—away from the self-centered, neurotic, narratives—can imaginatively enter other lives, by adopting a fictional yet experiential first-person point of view. This second form, discussed in Section 4.3, I call "projective imagining," in the sense that the subject's center of awareness is projected out and into another center, which is then inhabited or adopted—fictionally and temporally, on the mode of the "as if"—as one's own. Unlike the defense mechanism of "projective identification" found in Kleinian branches of psychoanalysis, the process of "projective imagination" does not involve splitting off unwanted parts of the self, but rather, imaginatively transporting the *locus* of the "I" through serious games of make-believe such as those found in fictional and hypnotic narratives.[1716]

In this way, I will underline the therapeutic value of narratives by drawing on arguments that are used to underscore their ethical value. Murdoch's concept of moral attention will therefore

[1716] In the Kleinian concept of "projective identification," unwanted parts of the self are split off and projected into the other. See Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 27 (1946): 97-110. See also: "In projective identification parts of the self and internal objects are split off and projected into the external object, which then becomes possessed by, controlled and identified with the projected parts. Projective identification has manifold aims: it may be directed toward the ideal object to avoid separation, or it may be directed toward the bad object to gain control of the source of danger. Various parts of the self may be projected, with various aims: bad parts of the self may be projected in order to get rid of them as well as to attack and destroy the object, good parts may be projected to avoid separation or to keep them safe from bad things inside or to improve the external object through a kind of primitive projective reparation." Hanna Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 27–28.

be central in this discussion, but will also be used in a more extensive, de-Christianized, sense. Indeed, here I also hope to emphasize the ways in which Murdoch is influenced by psychoanalysis, shifting critical attention away from the Platonism and mysticism often emphasized in her work.[1717] By transposing her concepts of moral attention and unselfing to the therapeutic field, I will reveal the importance that Murdoch also grants to fantasy, narration, and unconscious or affective processes in the constitution of the individual's ethical "texture of being," which on the one hand can limit our ethical awareness, but on the other can be redirected in order to produce transformation. By reemphasizing the connection between "immorality" and failure in attention (rather than evil or innate deficiency), I hope to illuminate modern hypnotherapy's potential of depathologization, which relies on the transformative potential of narrative and imagination. In both Murdoch and hypnosis, the redirection of the attention toward neglected possibilities, and away from illusory or harmful autosuggestions, constitutes the key to self-transformation, and the latent ethical value of fictional hypnotic-literary narratives. Despite their major differences, the narrative conception which I defend in this chapter shows that in both post-Wittgensteinian moral philosophy and hypnotherapy, self-transformation is not achieved by obeying different norms or general principles, but by refining capacities such as attention and perception. In this sense, absorption in the reality of other lives acts as an antidote to self-absorption. Both hypnotherapy and the novel (even in its postmodern, metanarrative forms), confront us with the transformative potential inherent in restorying, and with our own failures in moral attention. In this sense, we are placed in a position of responsibility to further cultivate attentiveness and openness toward our own potentially other lives, as well as those of others, and to a certain degree, to "commit" to the choices that stem from the understanding that ensues.

In the first part of this chapter (in Section 4.1), I will argue that hypnosis is a narrative form of therapy, in order to justify the comparison between hypnotic and novelistic imagination. In Section 4.2, I then draw out the ethical potential of the mode of attending enabled by the creative re-vision of hypnotic and novelistic imagination, by using Martha Nussbaum's defense of the

[1717] Reexamining the primacy of moral attention in Murdoch's work shifts the focus back toward her moral psychology, rather than the Platonic, mystical and Christian aspects described for instance in: Elizabeth Burns, "Iris Murdoch and the Nature of Good," *Religious Studies* 33, no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 303-313; Maria Antonaccio, "Imagining the Good: Iris Murdoch's Godless Theology," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethic*s 16 (1996): 223-242; Silvia Panizza, "A Secular mysticism?" in *Filosofía, arte y mística* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2017); Nora Hämäläinen, "What is a Wittgensteinian Neo-Platonist? Iris Murdoch, Metaphysics and Metaphor," *Philosophical papers* 42, no. 2 (July 2014): 191-225.

novel as moral philosophy and Iris Murdoch's concept of moral attention. I sketch out an ethics of "unselfing" and "immersive restorying," where fictional narratives enable a reorientation of the subject's awareness, which leads to a corrective internal experience. Finally, in Section 4.3, I move from this internal transformation to the externally oriented, "projective imagination," In this second-mode of unselfing or becoming other, the ability to immerse oneself in the lives of others is described as a central ethical capacity, of which novels and hypnosis provide significant models. Throughout the whole chapter, then, I argue that the link between ethics and hypnosis-therapeutics is therefore *aesthetic* in nature, and that the projective imagination is what opens up the individual to both the possibility, and reality, of other lives.

4.1. Hypnosis as "Narrative Therapy"?

In this section, my goal is to show that hypnosis can be conceived of as a narrative, rather than as a dramatic form of therapy. This will allow me to underline, in the two sections that follow, the therapeutic and ethical value of narrative ways of looking at the world, which are shared by hypnosis and novelistic prose. As I will argue here, once they are examined in light of the experience of novel reading, two of the main techniques used in hypnotherapy—hypnotic "regression" and "futurization"—can be conceived of as complex forms of storytelling, rather than mere abreaction or other dramatic-mimetic forms of acting-out. This requires that we take into consideration the distance and awareness at the heart of the experience, which we discussed in Chapter 3. In this way, the hypnotic subject's ability to "narrate"—that is, to recreate and reinterpret—rather than blindly reproduce, her experience in the therapeutic context, will become more clearly apparent.

4.1.1. Mimetic vs. Anti-mimetic Poles of the Hypnotic Experience

Since the end of the twentieth century, psychotherapists have had to adapt to postmodern, antipositivist, and anti-psychiatric criticism, which brought psychopathological realism and the concept of mental illness into question.[1718] These were replaced with a linguistic perspective that

[1718] For the history of the narrative turn in medicine, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, see appendix. For a description of the narrative turn in psychoanalysis, see chapter 1.

drew attention away from pathology and toward explaining symptoms as systems of communication and narration. In this process, the ideal of an objective science of the mind became destabilized from all sides, as if under attack.[1719] In reaction against biological models, therapy exploded into a "multiple relativism" which culminated into the aporia of the famous Dodo Bird Verdict, according to which *everybody wins*.[1720] Since then, multiple branches of psychotherapy have adopted the "narrative turn" described by Bradley Lewis in *Narrative Psychiatry,* which is helpful to reconcile and integrate various psychological models under a shared orientation, without falling into an "anything-goes relativism."[1721] After World War II, hypnotherapy similarly evolved to take into consideration this theoretical revolution,[1722] and came to define itself as the art of manipulating language and communication, rather than subjects, mental faculties or parts of the psyche. Strikingly however, in the history of medicine and psychoanalysis, as in the hypnotic literature itself, the narrative dimension of hypnosis is still excessively underemphasized. Too often, hypnotherapy is described a cathartic, dramatic practice, in which repressed memories are uncovered, "acted out" and abreacted, as if hypnosis had not evolved since the method developed by Freud and Breuer. In this chapter, I will argue that, on the contrary, a proper understanding of therapeutic success in hypnotherapy requires a narrative conception of the subject's activity. In this light, hypnosis no longer requires positing the historical truth of the material which it "uncovers" and can be considered as one of the narratively oriented therapies described by Bradley Lewis in *Narrative Psychiatry,* even though Lewis fails to mention it among the models he enumerates. Reconceptualizing hypnosis in light of literary theory will therefore reveal the centrality of fictionality and storytelling in its practice—not merely in its content, but also in its structure and form.

[1719] Omer and Alon underline the lexical field of colonization at the heart of this opposition between positivist and anti-positivist theories and practices: "Each barbarian tribe had no idea it was part of the 'barbarian invasion'. Their cumulative effects, however, slowly began to make a difference. Anti-positivism became more organized… Many positivists became barbarized." Omer and Alon, 191.

[1720] This principle indicates that when it comes to therapeutic success, the specific therapeutic method matters less than the common factors shared by all forms of therapy, regardless of the particular school of thought of the practitioner. For a more detailed explanation, see appendix.

[1721] Bradley Lewis, *Narrative Psychiatry* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 32.

[1722] See especially the work of Gregory Bateson and the Palo Alto School, for example: Jay Haley, *Strategies of Psychotherapy* (Grune & Stratton 1963); Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity.* (New York: Dutton, 1979) and G. Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and John Weakland, "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," *Behavioral Science* 1, no. 4 (1956): 251-254.

The non-narrative, dramatic conception of hypnosis stems from what Ruth Leys and Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen name its *mimetic* dimension, which as I suggest, is overemphasized at the expense of its anti-mimetic pole.[1723] As Leys describes it, hypnotic mimesis designates the tendency of the hypnotic subject to "imitate or repeat whatever they were told to say or do," like an automaton.[1724] Borch-Jacobsen stresses the importance of using the term mimesis rather than *imitation*, since the latter still presumes the existence of a "spectatorial" or "spectating" subject, who according to this conception, is "absent" during the hypnotic experience.[1725] In the case of the hysteric patient, the activity of the subject is reduced to a mere "reproduction of traumatic scenes," as in Charcot's demonstrations described in Chapter 1.[1726] This conception of hypnosis as pure mimesis best describes the state of the practice in the late 1880s. In Bernheim's *Suggestive Therapeutics,* this is especially clear in descriptions of subjects who act out suggestions as if performing on stage:

> I say 'You are a young girl.' He drops his head in a modest way, opens a drawer, takes out a piece of cloth and pretends to sew… I say: 'You are a general at the head of your army. He holds himself erect, and cries out 'Forward!' balancing his body as if he were on horseback. I say 'You are a good and holy priest'. He puts on a pious expression, walks to and from reading his breviary, and makes the sign of the cross, *as seriously as if it were all reality*.[1727]

Here, the laboratory has become a theater, the subject turned into a mere automaton and hypnosis into a practice resembling sadistic entertainment barely disguised as scientific experimentation. If anything is *serious* here*,* it is the ability of the vivid—realist, hypnotic—illusion to seemingly constitute an attack on the dignity of the subject, who according to this dramatic conception becomes dispossessed of his agency and autonomy.[1728] This conception of hypnosis is strengthened by Bernheim's abundant use of a theatrical vocabulary: the verbs "play" and

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[1723] For example, Micale describes the "dramatic, convulsive, polysymptomatic forms" of hysteria in Charcot's writings of the 1880 and the "gross and florid" motor and sensory conversions in Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria.* Micale, "On the 'Disappearance' of Hysteria, A Study in the Clinical Deconstruction of a Diagnosis," *Isis* 84, no. 3 (September 1993): 498.

[1724] Leys, *Trauma,* 8.

[1725] Borch-Jacobsen, "Dispute," in Chertock et. al., *Hypnose en Psychanalyse* (Paris: Dunod, 1987), 203-6; *The Freudian Subject,* 39. Nevertheless, as Leys has shown, in his ulterior writing, Borch-Jacobsen shifts from this mimetic conception to a "repudiation" of his previous understanding, in favor of an anti-mimetic emphasis on the autonomy of the subject. Leys, *Trauma,* 14.

[1726] As we shall see, this notion of mimesis "tended to call into question the veracity of the victim's testimony… and hence to make traumatic neurosis and traumatic memory a matter of suggested fabrication or simulation." Leys, *Trauma,* 10.

[1727] Richet, in Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 59.

[1728] This is the paradoxical seriousness (power) of hypnosis, which is in great part responsible for the lack of seriousness (legitimacy) often attributed to hypnosis as a practice, as in Thomas Mann's description of stage hypnosis. See the general introduction.

"perform," the adjective "dramatic," and the terms "part" or "role" appear time and again in the descriptions of his case histories[1729].

Even in modern histories of hypnosis, the mimetic theory is hard to shake. Even in its permissive and indirect forms, hypnotherapy remains strongly tinted by the cathartic model and linked to the nineteenth-century conceptions of the conscious subject as, strictly speaking, absent. As Borch-Jacobsen puts it:

> The subject cannot see himself miming another at the moment he is miming, just as he cannot say that he is playacting precisely while he is acting. In order to do that—in order to see the invisible, or say the unsayable—he would have to reflect himself, absent himself from the plane on which he is speaking, take himself as reference point for his own discourse; in short, he would have to arrive at the vantage point of the lucid spectator.[1730]

This conception of hypnotic "becoming-other" as an obliteration of the subject is in great part due to the fact that even today, hypnotherapy is often reduced to *one* of its many potential uses. Indeed, it is too often associated with its traditional function in trauma recovery work, where according to the dramatic conception, the patient, "incapable of consciously testifying to her traumatic experience," is supposedly only able "to repeat it in the mode of a compulsive and repetitive acting out" during the trance state.[1731] This "mimetic-suggestive" paradigm conceives of hypnotic regression as a process where the subject is "immerse[d] so profoundly" in reliving the past memory that "the kind of specular distance necessary for cognitive knowledge" of the event is "precluded."[1732] In this conception of trauma-work, hypnotic remembrance can never be a recollection or narration. It is a mere reproduction, a re-living of repressed material, which for Leys, explains why "the effort to cure patients by getting them, through the use of hypnotic catharsis or by other means, to recollect and narrate the dissociated traumatic origin was *destined to fail."*[1733] Available only in hypnotic trance but not in conscious awareness, the traumatic scene is never "present" to the subject *as subject*. In the shell-shocked soldiers and nineteenth-century case histories examined by Leys, "a scrutiny of the case histories of the traumatic neuroses suggests

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[1729] Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 55-60.
[1730] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject,* 39.
[1731] Leys, *Trauma,* 2. For the patient suffering from PTSD, "the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; and instead, is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories. The experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented *as* past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful dissociated, traumatic present." Ibid. This description could just as well apply to the Freudian conception of transference. In either case, repressed past material escapes the law of temporal change and pushes to become conscious again.
[1732] Ibid., 9
[1733] Ibid., emphasis added

that this [narration under hypnosis] is a demand that cannot readily be met."[1734] This is largely because in traditional models, the conception of the subject is still one in which "in deep hypnosis [he or she] is not a spectator of the (real or fantasized) emotional scene but is completely caught up in it."[1735] In this conception, the trance state involves "a profound absence from, or forgetfulness of, the self," in which "the dissociated patient suffers his passion 'beyond' himself—beyond memory and self-representation—literally fainting away in the hypnotic enactment." Leys, 643.[1736] In other terms, the subject is fundamentally absent, having become "altered" by hypnosis and thus "other to itself."[1737]

As I will argue further on, this conception greatly underestimates both the anti-mimetic aspect of hypnosis and the suggestive nature of the medical or experimental environments which lead patients to adopt such types of behavior. Borch-Jacobsen and Leys' argument that "if speech or verbalization often accompanies those scenes, it does so not in the form of a discourse … but in the mode of an intensely animated miming of the traumatic 'event' that occurs in the absence of self-observation and self-representation" neglects the subject's capacity to engage fully in "fiction" or make-believe. Additionally, its platonic undertones of criticism of mimesis echoes eighteenth-century critics of the novel's "dangerous powers." Indeed, as shown in Chapter 3, the absorbed subject's full immersion and engagement in hypnotic remembrance, even when it gives off an

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[1734]Leys, "Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory." *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 4, (Summer, 1994): 632. In Leys' descriptions of the use of hypnosis in the treatment of the war neuroses with shell-shock soldiers for instance, it is impossible that "the patient's speech and behavior under hypnosis be interpreted "as a narrative in full consciousness of that lived experience as past." On the contrary, hypnotic regression merely leads subjects to carry out a "'reproduction' of the traumatic scene in the mode of a 'blind' emotional acting in the present" (ibid.) This "emotional acting out of the hypnotic catharsis" cannot be converted "into re-presentation and self-narration." Ibid.

[1735] Ibid., 632

[1736] In Leys' example, (taken from Brown) indeed, "the shell-shocked soldier immediately begins to twist and turn on the couch and shouts terror-stricken voice. He talks as he talked at the time when the shock occurred to him. He really does live again through the experiences of that awful time. Sometimes he speaks as if in dialogue, punctuated with intervals of silence corresponding to the remarks of his [hallucinated] interlocutor, like a person speaking at the telephone. At other times he indulges in imprecations and soliloquy.... In every case he speaks and acts as if he were again under the influence of the terrifying emotions." Leys, "Shell Shock," 643. In these examples, "patients often became confused to the point of swooning when they were asked to narrate their experiences in the past tense. In some cases [the shell-shocked soldier] is able to reply to my questions and give an account of his experiences," Brown relates. "In others he cannot do so, but continues to writhe and talk as if he were still in the throes of the actual experience" Brown, in Leys, in *Critical Inquiry,* 644. This shows the subject's remarkably strong aesthetic capacity for make-believe. Furthermore, contrary to Leys' examples, numerous modern empirical cases show examples of patients re-narrating calmly, without the dramatic acting out of nineteenth century and shell-shocked catharsis.

[1737] See also: "It is its own other, although it is never able to represent that other to itself" Roustang, foreword to Borch-Jacobsen's *The Freudian Subject* (Stanford: University of California Press, 1988), viii. My central argument in this chapter is that becoming other does not necessarily imply losing oneself. Failure to understand this point is in fact the main cause of "resistance" in subjects who struggle to enter the hypnotic state.

impression of total absence, is not incompatible with a simultaneous awareness that often remains highly active. During hypnotic regression, attention has merely been redirected, it has not become inoperative. The intensity of the affect which can accompany hypnotic remembrance thus need not call into question the subject's capacity to narrate. Rather, the behavior of the subject can be explained by a combination of cultural-historical expectations and authoritative (often unconscious) suggestions on the part of the clinicians of what the trance state should look like.[1738] In other words, the impression of non-narrativity given by the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century case histories examined by Leys is the outcome of the clinician and subject's unsuspected collaboration, of their shared desire to produce a successful therapeutic outcome, and therefore of their temporary, willful forgetting, of the subject's "hidden observer."[1739]

A mimetic conception of trauma and hypnosis thus leads to a reductive description of hypnotic phenomena and subjectivity. Firstly, it omits the fact that traumatic abreaction is but *one of many* illustrations of the hypnotic ability to temporarily become-other*,* which must be reinscribed in a more general framework of hypnotic narrativity in order to be properly understood. Indeed, it omits the therapeutic potential of hypnotic dissociation, in which the subject is able to observe herself while carrying out fictional acts of make-believe, looking upon herself as one would a fictional character. Secondly, it misses the subtlety of hypnotic temporality, which, like the novel, allows for various movements of back and forth in time, as well as condensation, dilatation or distortions of the subjective experience of duration.[1740] Finally, neglecting the narrative dimension of the hypnotic experience takes away the responsibility of the subject and the contingency at the heart of human experience. Reconceptualized as narrative, the therapeutic

[1738] For a description of the inevitably suggestive nature of both therapeutic and experimental contexts, see Chapter 1.
[1739] Indeed, in Spiegel's example analyzed further down, a part of the subject's awareness still understands the instructions regarding trance, i.e., the meta-instructions, despite the fact that he no longer "understands" on the internal level of "content." Indeed, "despite this need to use an interpreter when interviewing him at ages younger than 13 years, he could understand and respond without evidence of confusion to instruction related to his state of trance. For example, while being interviewed at the 10-year-old level, he was told, 'When I touch your forehead, your eyes will close' and 'You are now going back into the years; you are now 6 years old—this is your sixth birthday'. His response was so clear that there was no doubt whatsoever that he understood exactly what was said. Again, at the 6-year-old level, when asked, 'How old are you?' he looked around with confusion and asked, 'Vas?'. This case illustrates both the layering of memories that are later tapped by the trance regression and *the dual focus that characterizes the trance*. The subject relived the world as he had experienced it at age 12 years in German and at the same time understood trance instructions in English as a 25-year-old adult. This rather strange situation seemed to provoke little tension or puzzlement for the subject." David Spiegel and Herbert Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment, Clinical Uses of Hypnosis* (Washington DC and London: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2004), 33, emphasis added.
[1740] See M. Erickson and Linn Cooper, *Time Distortion in Hypnosis. An Experimental and clinical investigation* (1959; Bancyfelin: Crown House Publishing, 2006).

potential of hypnotherapy reveals itself to reside less in affective abreaction than in the imaginative exploration of a range of fictional, alternative plotlines, which place the subject in a position of making a choice about the type of self-narration they wish to adopt. Rather than the mere acting out of an indefinitely reemerging past, hypnosis offers an imaginative yet realist antidote to the fatalism or deterministic outlooks that can lead to disillusioned apathy.

Furthermore, because it reconciles narrativity with its emotional and unconscious efficacy, our narrative conception of hypnosis bypasses the central "conundrum" that reemerges throughout its history, integrating the mimesis-anti-mimesis opposition rather than oscillating between both poles.[1741] The narrative outlook yields a balanced conception of hypnosis, distancing it from the "blindness" of the mimetic pole toward the autonomy and creative capacities of the subject. For this reason, the history of literary theory can help us to better understand the nature of hypnotic experience: theories of reading and reader-responses reveal that genuine emotional responsiveness to fictional works can be experienced without us having to decide on the truth value of the text or the narrated content. Hypnosis and literature thus mutually illuminate one another: both engage the whole subject, without this leading us to give too much weight to the problem of historical truth in the constitution of a worldview, of an individual's value or belief system.[1742] The *seriousness* of narrative—that is, the ability of fictional utterances to *do* things in the world—thus extends beyond the truth of its propositional knowledge. Rather, it lies in the transformative potential of the imaginative-aesthetic capacity to temporarily become-other and in the effects or responses that it elicits in the reader. As a form of make-believe in the sense of Kendall Walton, becoming-other has little to do with a total loss of self. On the contrary, it allows for a more informed return to the self, a notion which is at the center of hypnotherapy. As Erika Fromm notes in *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis,* "the inner world makes possible a two-step adaptation process: temporary withdrawal from the external world followed by a return to the external word with improved mastery."[1743] A comparative study of the transformative potential of hypnotic and

[1741] Leys, *Trauma,* 14. Leys has shown how the oscillation between mimesis and anti-mimesis "structures the history of trauma" and, as seen in our general introduction, is at the heart of the debates concerning the nature of the hypnotic state. Ibid. The narrative conception I am defending bypasses the need to choose between these opposed, mimetic and anti-mimetic, poles.
[1742] The narrative framework is also useful in trauma recovery as it avoids the binary alternative between *either* "cognitive recovery and integration" *or* "cathartic discharge or abreaction," as it is presented by Leys, in *Trauma,* 12.
[1743] Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis* (Hillsdale NJ; London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1986), 221.

novelistic narratives thus allows for a renewed description of how, as Arthur Frank puts it, stories are "made of air but leave their mark."[1744]

In what follows, I will begin by bringing out the narrative dimension of the hypnotic imagination, arguing hypnotherapy is best placed in the domain of narrative oriented therapies. Then, I will examine two specific hypnotic therapeutic narratives: regression and futurization. In doing so, my objective is to underline similarities that these techniques share with the projective imagination represented and cultivated in novelistic texts. My contention is that non-narrative conceptions of hypnosis, which take these techniques literally rather than as exercises in storytelling, blur the lines between historical and narrative truth, creating risks at both the therapeutic and the ethical levels. If properly understood as *narrative* techniques, regression and futurization reveal the transformative power of imaginative and affective engagement. Not only is this immersivity shared by hypnosis and literature, it distinguishes the former from cognitive therapies and the latter from the philosophical essay, journalistic piece or historical treatise. Thus, the bond between the therapeutic and ethical value of the narratives I examine here is their *aesthetic* dimension.

4.1.1. 1. The Hypnotic Subject of Enunciation: Narrative Discourse and Dissociation

Representations of the *fin-de-siècle* hypnotic subject often involve images of the hysteric blindly acting out a traumatic memory which she cannot, strictly speaking, narrate. A closer examination of the history of hypnosis, however—especially outside the history of trauma—reveals that narrativity—that is, the ability for the subject to narrate her experience and the degree of reflexive awareness necessary to do so—is present at the heart of hypnosis. Furthermore, I would argue that this was even the case in the 1880s, despite the historical and cultural differences between trance phenomena of the time, and those displayed in hypnotherapy offices today.

In this sense, rather than an essential modality of hypnotic cure, the "hysterical" acting out which is so characteristic of nineteenth-century hypnosis can be considered as the product of the therapist's expectations, and the cultural context in which the hypnotic experience unfolds. The

[1744] Arthur Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe. A Socio-Narratology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 51.

"acted out" material could have very well been narrated, *had* narrating been the expectation at the time.

Even in nineteenth-century conceptions of the hypnotic subject as automaton, the acknowledgment that the subject is not systematically or entirely absent from himself is still present. For example, in a male patient who relives an 1870 battle scene during hypnotic regression twenty years later, Bernheim notes the split in awareness between two temporally divided yet presently coexisting subjects of experience: "It is another self he sees and feels acting in this strange division of his personality. He speaks to me, answers me, knows that he has been put to sleep in the hospital and, *at the same time*, finds himself on the battle-field; the inconsistency does not strike him."[1745] Similarly, about a patient who imagines himself peacefully walking and conversing with his brother, a wood merchant at Bar-le-Duc, Bernheim notes:

> He… *tells me* everything he has seen on the walk… In spite of his dream, he retained the idea of reality. He knew that I was present and that he was asleep. At one and the same time, he was asleep in Nancy and awake in a wood-yard at Bar-le-Duc. The contradiction did not strike him.[1746]

In these examples, rather than having become entirely other as they find themselves absorbed in the hypnotic scene, the subjects remain aware of the operator's prompts and questions. Indeed, hypnotic dissociation allows them to experience hypnotic remembrance without the "contradictory" nature of the experience being problematic. The subject is both narrator and character, and retains awareness of present surroundings. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, Bernheim thus notes the "double personality" of certain somnambules,[1747] revoking the purely mimetic thesis, and confirming that hypnotic regression is not incompatible with narration of experience.

Later on, as the "pluralist revolution" of the twentieth century took place in psychotherapy, the once "solid" field became fragmented into a "multiple relativism" and hypnotherapy became one option among many in the wide array of therapeutic possibilities.[1748]

4.1.1.2. Structural Similarities Between Hypnotherapy and the Novel

Restorying and Reframing: Telling a New Life Story

[1745] Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 66.
[1746] Ibid., 69, emphasis added.
[1747] Term in the original.
[1748] Omer and Alon, *Constructing Therapeutic Narratives,* 191.

Like psychoanalysis, modern hypnotherapy has been affected by the narrative turn which impacted other branches of therapeutics, medicine and psychiatry.[1749] Including hypnosis among other narrative oriented psychotherapeutic models thus helps emphasize common ground between them, providing a shared meta-narrative framework for branches which span from mainstream cognitive-behaviorist models to humanistic and more alternative forms of therapy.[1750] It contributes to psychotherapy integration and helps offer a solution to the Dodo Bird verdict by underlining common narrative concepts and structures at work in various, sometimes seemingly opposed, therapeutic branches.[1751] Hypnosis is in fact especially suited to narratively oriented therapy since it defines human character as the sum of the individual's autosuggestions, which translate into beliefs, exterior actions, and habitual patterns—the sum of which we call "identity."

In this sense, it conforms to Jerome Bruner's view that "we organize our experience and our memory… mainly in the form of a narrative—stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on."[1752] Furthermore, it adopts Daniel Dennett's notion that selves are the product of narrative and that the urge to tell stories is biologically given in humans: "Like spider webs, our tales are spun by us; our human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is their product, not their source."[1753] Therapeutic intervention then involves the modification of the stories which constitute or lead to the individual's symptom or problem. It is sensitive to the selective aspect of our narratives, and to the aspect-blindness to which they inevitably lead to in everyday life:

> Every story is a form of censorship in that it is based upon paying attention to certain events at the exclusion of others, as well as applying particular meanings to the events thus selected rather than other possible meanings.[1754]

Furthermore, hypnotic restorying does not proceed by merely evoking or summarizing, describing, or analyzing problematic narratives, as other forms of narrative therapy do.[1755] Rather, it produces

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[1749] See Appendix A and B.

[1750] For Lewis, this common narrative orientation among various models helps bring psychotherapy back full circle, since "more than a hundred years after Freud introduced talking therapy, psychotherapy has returned to its early appreciation of the similarity between case histories and narrative stories." Lewis, *Narrative Psychiatry,* 42. As mentioned higher up, although Lewis mentions "visualization exercises" as part of the "alternative" available models, he does not mention or describe hypnosis in his description of narrative psychotherapeutic models.

[1751] See appendix.

[1752] J. Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 4.

[1753] Daniel Dennett, "The Origin of Selves," *Cogito* 3, no. 3 (1989):169.

[1754] Parry and Doan, *Story Re-visions*, 64.

[1755] In narrative therapy, "restorying" is often carried out in two phases: deconstruction—where the therapist looks for gaps and breaks in the client's internalized story, questioning whether its values and preferences are "absolute or constructed." Lewis, 50—and "reauthoring"—where client and therapist collaborate to present or expand future options, taking into consideration the "otherwise" of the client's story and encouraging access to storylines which

an immersive and imaginative recreation of the problematic storyline, placing the subject in a position where they can imagine, create, and experience alternative plot-lines *from within* the fictional world, as a character, while simultaneously writing or narrating life (*via* re-reading it) from "without." Exposure to, and imaginative elaboration of, these alternative storylines reintroduces the sense of agency and responsibility inherent to narrative conceptions of identity construction. Not only is hypnotic restorying a cognitive (rather than merely passive and automatic) process, it uses the structure of narrative fiction to produce therapeutic effects that are unattainable through purely intellectual or analytic procedures. Hypnotic restorying therefore differs from narrative medicine or narrative psychiatry—which listen to and compare narratives, but do not take the extra step of creating the combination of immersion and interactivity that elicits affective engagement before carrying out the modification of the patient's story. Unlike what occurs in the conscious "reauthoring" used in models that *don't* use the therapeutic potential of fictionality, in the immersive restorying of hypnosis, the individual is not merely a cut-off observer but also an active participant, whose entire being is engaged, with emotional, perceptual, and imaginative aspects of experience not only included but having crucial therapeutic value.

Character in the Therapeutic Setting

Hypnotherapy is also a narrative form of therapy in that it puts to use several key concepts in narrative studies, which structure the progression of a therapeutic session, or course of treatment. Indeed, taking a closer look at these concepts, we see that therapeutic change follows a structure reminiscent of that of a basic story. In *Constructing Therapeutic Narratives* (1997) for instance, Israeli therapists Haim Omer and Nahi Alon draw out the literary concepts which they use in their own pluralistic approach, that reconciles psychoanalysis and hypnotherapy. They propose a useful account of notions such as character, plot and perspective, which strengthens the analogy between literary and therapeutic narrative and change.

For instance, as their description shows, in the context of hypnotherapy, the notion of *character* is not used to explain the nature of the psychological self, but can be employed in a manner that facilitates therapeutic change, by emphasizing the flexibility and narrative dimension

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have been "subjugated by the family's and culture's dominant discourse as to what constitutes the right way of doing things." Parry and Doan, 17. See Appendix.

of identity. In the context of hypnotherapy, the subject directly experiences this malleability of character by experimenting with several imaginative variations, as we shall note further on. Whereas in the past a whole "gallery" of psychopathological types was available for the practitioner to draw from, these are no longer unquestionably available in the postmodern era.[1756] In this sense, the concept of character best enters the contemporary therapeutic setting *via* the concept of narrative identity. As Ricoeur writes, "fiction, in particular narrative fiction, is an irreducible dimension of self-understanding," and "life can be understood only through the stories that we tell about it."[1757] Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity is useful in that it proposes a nonessentialist, yet integrated conception of the self, which integrates change and mutability into the "cohesion of a life."[1758] It allows for continuity over time and "a relative stability of self, without implying a substantial … core to this stability."[1759] The notion of character thus suggests the possibility of change yet prevents the psychological dissolution or fragmentation which is often feared in hypnosis. It preserves temporal continuity and situation, while conserving a sense of potentiality for future developments. This is especially relevant for future-oriented forms of therapy like hypnosis, which emphasize possibilities of modification rather than the determined aspect of character. Indeed, as François Roustang notes:

> If one merely turns towards history and remembering, therapy can go back in time, but will not change anything in the patient's existence. … Remembrance can lead us to this primal or primitive space, but it will never provide us with the impetus for change, just as the fascination for the archaic cannot free us from fatality.[1760]

In modern hypnotherapy, character is no longer chained to the past, nor is it something to be acted out. On the contrary, even if its nature is narrative, it is to be modified from within, matching the psychological depth of novelistic characterization far more than the exterior, flat surface of the *dramatis personae*. By allowing the subject to imaginatively travel through time and space,

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[1756] Omer and Alon, 33. See appendix. For Omer and Alon, this type of characterization "fails to pass the test of narrative empathy," since it is superimposed from the outside onto the inside. Ibid.

[1757] Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in D. Wood, ed., *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and interpretation* (London Routledge, 1991), 30.

[1758] Ricoeur, *Temps et Récit,* tome 3. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985), 356. As Ricoeur writes, "Unlike the abstract identity of the Same, narrative identity, which constitutes ipseity, can include change, mutability, into the cohesion of a life. The subject then appears as constituted both as reader and writer of his life, as Proust had it. As literary analysis of the autobiographical genre has shown, the story of a life is perpetually reshaped by all the true or fictional stories that the subject tells himself. This refiguration transforms life itself into a network of interwoven stories." Ibid., 355-56, our translation. (See also: "cette littérature est l'instrument irremplaçable d'exploration de la concordance discordante que constitue la cohésion d'une vie." Ibid., 200).

[1759] Lewis, 48.

[1760] Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?,* 131. As noted in Chapter 1, not all hypnotherapists adopt an anti-psychoanalytic stance as Roustang does in this passage.

hypnotic restorying thus literalizes the notion that "we live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed."[1761]

A further aspect of Ricoeur's conception that sheds light on the modern hypnotic subject is the notion that the stability of our narrative interpretations comes not from an individual essence but in part from the "weight" of the cultural stories with which we are surrounded.[1762] Emphasizing the cultural aspect of narrative identity also preserves a sense of freedom for the subject, opening up the possibility—as in narrative therapy—of modifying the influencing factors. As Stuart Hall argues, as a "process of becoming rather than being," culturally narrated identities are more impacted by "routes" rather than "roots"—by personal trajectory rather than fixed, naturalized or rigid senses of belonging.[1763]

With this sensitivity to the impact of external narratives and suggestions in mind, in hypnotherapy, careful attention is thus given to the weight of the practitioner's acts of "characterization." Indeed, in the medical or therapeutic context, stories about illness are "much more than epiphenomena to the experience" but on the contrary can "determine the experience."[1764] In this sense, a psychopathological characterization, "far from helping the client, may actually become a crucial link in a pathologizing process."[1765] Rather than purely descriptive, diagnoses can become solidified into identities, acting as suggestions. They form an integral part of the etiological equation of the symptoms that doctors claim to merely observe. For example, as Ian Hacking notes in *Reconstructing Individualism,* PTSD is a way of "'*making up*' a certain type of person that individuals can conceive themselves as *being.*"[1766] Therapeutic models which are sensitive to this suggestive dimension must therefore strive to produce open narratives rather than solidify identity into "fixed types."

[1761] Brook, *Reading for the Plot*, 3.
[1762] Lewis, 48.
[1763] Stuart Hall, "Who Needs Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* ed. S. Hall and P. du Gay (London: Sage Publications), 1996, 4. "Not the so-called return to roots, but a coming-to-terms with our 'routes'," which allows for questioning their emergence and delineating future possible routes to be taken…Not 'who we are' or 'where we came from,' so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves." Ibid.
[1764] Lewis, 26.
[1765] Omer and Alon, 33.
[1766] Leys, *Trauma,* 6, emphasis added.

Nevertheless, because some degree of characterization remains necessary, and inevitable,[1767] what the therapeutic process involves is replacing limiting characterizations with more fulfilling ones: "we can oppose the client's negative self-descriptions or our own tendency to pathologize only by developing an alternative, fully humanizing characterization … we would rather talk of heroic than neurotic characters."[1768]

This is what leads Omer and Alon to propose their concept of "narrative empathy," which they define as the process of listening to and "re-writing" the patient's narrative, a fundamentally ethical act.[1769] More than merely lending a sympathetic ear, this consists of making sense of the internal logic of the patient's problem or symptom, from *within* their own worldview, thereby "uncovering" the inner logic of their "seemingly irrational behavior."[1770] Significantly, this "empathy" is achieved *through* the process of narrating itself, from which understanding emerges. It lies in the elaboration of a new story that credits the client for "having developed a reasonable solution to the harsh conditions in which she found herself," rather than producing a diagnosis or pathologization of the problem.[1771] Therapy can thus be considered as a form of open characterization, constructed on a collaborative act of story-making where therapist and patient compete and collaborate to produce more complex and counterintuitive narratives than the opening problem-story, while respecting the latter as legitimate, rather than rejecting or condemning it.

Hypnotherapy thus retains sensitivity to the effects of characterization, of the suggestive impact of the operator or therapist's discourse on the patient.[1772] As Borch-Jacobsen notes, patients "are not passive. … They react to the categories that describe them, either by rejecting them or by adopting new behaviors that in turn further confirm their categories, till … patients and doctors elaborate together a new psychopathological paradigm."[1773] A total absence of characterization on the other hand can be dangerous and lead to splitting and disintegration. Thus if the notion of

[1767] Indeed, "not to characterize would mean not to extrapolate from one act to the next and have [others] respond at any moment with any behavior whatsoever… the question is: what kind of characterization will it be?" Omer and Alon, 34.
[1768] Omer and Alon, 34.
[1769] Ibid., 6.
[1770] Ibid., 180.
[1771] Ibid.
[1772] Another way of framing this is to say that hypnotherapists themselves are careful to avoid letting their practice be drawn too far toward the mimetic pole.
[1773] Borch-Jacobsen, *Making Minds and Madness. From Hysteria to Depression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6. In this work, Borch-Jacobsen traces the history of mental pathology from hysteria to depression, showing how the discourse of psychiatry "is not separated from the 'object' it deals with because it contributes to powerfully creating it." Ibid., 5.

character exists in modern hypnotherapy, it is much less on the mode of the nineteenth-century theatrical roles, than as a flexible narrative which can be deconstructed, reinterpreted, and reshaped, and whose narrative dimension is a therapeutic asset rather than an obstacle on the path to therapeutic "truth."[1774] Hypnotherapy requires that the operator remain attentive to the patient's preexisting "character style," facilitating immersion and guiding the process of *trying on* various possible characters, instead of producing predetermining/ed, fixed or rigid, often pathologizing, acts of characterization. The process resembles the creation of fictional characters' lives, which involves finding balance between completely inexistent and overdetermined characterization.[1775] For this reason, "a comparative logic" can be used in hypnotherapy, as in other narrative therapies, in order to show the client that "we can understand ourselves in the same way we understand characters."[1776] Rather than a mere descriptive category, character can thus serve as a therapeutic starting point waiting to be modified, its only essence being its narrative and dynamic qualities.

Therapeutic Plots

However, in the context of hypnotherapy and solution-oriented models, the notion of plot, which emphasizes events over character, action over being, is even more fitting than the notion of character to illustrate the process of therapeutic change.[1777] Drawing attention away from identity, its emphasis on doing rather than being implicitly favors the notion of *becoming* over that of being determined by the past, which is especially relevant to the therapeutic elaboration of alternative storylines found in hypnotherapy. Like characterization, plot serves to create continuity in the patient's experience and its narration, providing temporal coherence to what would otherwise

[1774] See Arabella Kurtz' definition of narrative truth in therapy in *The Good Story* as analyzed further down. Erika Fromm's hypnoanalysis can be considered as another example of the flexibility attributed to the "personality" in the context of hypnotherapy. In her work with borderline and psychotic patients, she uses object relations theory and hypnosis to create a "complete restructuring" of the personality by enabling introjection of the good object and creation of object constancy. See Erika Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis,* 40-54.

[1775] This notion is often implicit in therapeutic branches which emphasize de-pathologizing of the patient's symptoms, as in Epston and White's "externalization of the problem," and the Ericksonian conception of the symptom as "solution."

[1776] Lewis, 47.

[1777] As Aristotle pointed out and Denham restates, "a fictional narrative is not merely a list of particular considerations or an itemization of particular characters and events. It presents… configured patterns of these and the patterns are (typically) non-arbitrary ones." Alison Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 351.

remain "confused, unformed, and mute."[1778] Indeed, as Paul Ricoeur famously established, emplotment creates narrative synthesis out of separate and heterogeneous elements which become organized into a *temporal* perception.[1779] It allows for an "intelligible connection to be made between the elements of the story," even when the relation between events is not strongly *causal*.[1780] This is especially important in the treatment of traumatic experiences which are not only fragmented but also "shatter the frame of a person's overall life-narrative."[1781] Emplotment thus sets the basis of meaningfulness for self-narratives, especially as "the acutest sense of traumatic disruption will be felt precisely at those points in the narrative where these … conditions of meaningfulness are invalidated."[1782] Framed thusly, the existence, structure and continuity of

[1778] Lewis, 46. Arthur Frank argues that the "primary or primal work" of stories is to serve as guidance systems which direct our attention within what William James called the "blooming, buzzing confusion" of the world (Frank, 54). See William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 462.

[1779] See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 50-57; "Life in Quest of Narrative," 21-31; "Narrative Identity" in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics,* trans. D. Wood (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 189.

[1780] Lewis, 45. See Virginia Woolf, who argues that the modern novel should include in both its material and form the immediacy of human perception: "The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall they shape themselves into Monday or Tuesday." Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf,* ed. A. McNeille, vol. 4. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984), 160. The novel cannot do without including the "stuff" of life as it appears to consciousness, as well as the "dark places of psychology," which are neglected in the rigid plots of "conventional" novelistic prose. However, this modernist aesthetic of consciousness still involves some degree of organization, as Woolf notes that "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; it is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" Ibid., 162; 160. Here, the category of "plot" may indeed be used in an extensive sense, to describe the "halo" or "envelope" holding together modernist subjectivity and organizing experience, even if this organization is not causal or sequential. As Ricoeur points out, without plot, clock time—time understood as a series of nows—would be an abstraction and impossible to experience, since "the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain." Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 1 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 7. See Lewis, 44-45.

[1781] Omer and Alon, 159. According to the cognitive view of PTSD, "it is not the event so much as the meaning that is ascribed to it and related statements about the self" that drive posttraumatic reactions. In Lynn et al. *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2006), 169. In this way, "cognitive restructuring" can "assist the person in reconciling what occurred with his or her (pretrauma) belief system, especially in cases in which emotions like self-blame, guilt, and shame are part of the symptom picture." Ibid, 170.

[1782] Omer and Alon, 159. Continuity is indeed a crucial component in the treatment of trauma, whose victims have been described as undergoing a "temporary disruption in the ability to make sense of events or breakdown of their meaning-making assumptions." Wigren (1994) for example proposed that the traumatic effect of an experience is "directly linked to the victim's inability to organize it by chains of meaning." In this view, traumatic memories are not a story at all, but a collection of disconnected fragments of sensorial-physiological snapshots which are mentally disruptive precisely because they are formless" This view differs from the traditional Freud-Breuer cathartic method where the traumatic narrative is "repressed *en bloc*" and can be recovered as a whole. In Wigren's interpretation, "there is no narrative to begin with. Trauma consists precisely in the breakdown of the story-making ability that makes experience assimilable… The role of treatment is to help the client instruct for the first time the story of the trauma." For Omer and Alon, many clients suffering from trauma can be considered as having suffered "more of an inability to fit their traumatic stories into the flow of their narratives of self and world" than "from the chaotic fragmentation of the traumatic experience as such." Wigren, Omer and Alon, 158-159.

the narrative seems more important than its content, a dimension which will reemerge further on in our mention of the latent ethical value of fictional narrative.

Furthermore, the therapeutic process itself can thus be thought of as an emplotted narrative which, like fiction, contains beginnings, middles, and endings. As Almond and Almond point out, the opening of a novel and of therapeutic treatment also share strong similarities: they both begin with "a problem, a conflict, or an impasse" which must then be overcome and resolved.[1783] In the same vein, Omer and Alon argue that both literature and therapy must "attract, grip, and satisfy" and "early dropout from therapy may be not unlike dropping a book after a few pages."[1784] In both cases, openings are crucial as they "foreshadow the shape of the treatment" which, "like an operatic overture," allows for "a glimpse of the whole action."[1785] Subsequently, in "the middle parts" of the therapeutic process, plot and character development occur and "action, struggle, confusion, and flight" take place.[1786] In postmodern, feminist, and family narrative therapy, a new plot is often developed by deconstructing and retelling the story from the vantage point of "the clue that didn't fit," which leads to a reversal of the initial problem-narrative.[1787] Finally, just like novels have "happy or unhappy" endings in which "some sort of resolution or compromise occurs," treatment "ends also, if not with total happiness, with resolution and compromise."[1788] In other words, a

[1783] Almond and Almond, 19. For example, for Almond and Almond, Elizabeth Bennet begins *Pride and Prejudice* "at age twenty, with a set of intrapsychic conflicts, associated beliefs, and feelings about herself and others"; or "plot movement in *Jane Eyre* is the fictional equivalent of therapeutic movement." Ibid., 24; 60.
[1784] Omer and Alon, 76. As in a novel, once captured, "the client's attention and involvement must be kept at a high pitch: the promise of the beginning must unfold into a rewarding action." Ibid., 77.
[1785] Omer and Alon, 78.
[1786] Richard Almond and Barbara Almond, *The Therapeutic Narrative. Fictional Relationships and the Process of Psychological Change* (Westport and London: Praeger, 1996), 19. Whereas in psychoanalysis and hypnoanalysis this explicitly corresponds to the working through of the transference and resistance, in hypnotherapy used for symptom alleviation or supportive ego-strengthening hypnotherapy, it can correspond to moments of overcoming affective blockages, resistance to hypnotic induction, or systematic failure of suggested hypnotic phenomena.
[1787] Ibid., 88. For a description of Epston and White's Narrative Therapy, see the appendix. Furthermore, As Almond and Almond show, upheavals and disruptions are necessary for change to occur in both novelistic and therapeutic settings: "The existence of a problem does not lead to change. Something must happen to throw the sufferer off balance. If his gold had not been stolen, Silas Marner would have been gazing at it still. If Darcy had not appeared at the Netherfield ball to insult Elizabeth, her sardonic wit might have allowed her to live a life of protected spinsterhood. In some way, a problematic behavior or defense must become less viable as a solution" for change to occur. Almond and Almond, 173. Similarly, narrative delays also occur in therapy, and in a fictional text they are thus both psychologically plausible and necessary to mirror on a structural level the movement of "actual" therapeutic working through. For example, "Jane Austen could have brought the lovers of *Pride and Prejudice* together after their meeting at Pemberley, but her heroine, too, had intrapsychic issues to resolve… A novel with a narrative that involves intrapsychic change needs to provide time and opportunity (in the form of plot complexities) for the difficulties of 'working through'. The reader accepts and appreciates these delays because they are psychologically plausible, even necessary." Almond and Almond, 60.
[1788] Ibid., 19.

matching of therapeutic and novelistic sequences of "initial engagement, followed by the emergence of difficulties that must be resolved" can productively be brought to the fore, regardless of the school of thought or therapeutic orientation of the practitioner.[1789] This metanarrative approach participates in psychotherapy integration by emphasizing continuity rather than divergence between models. Evidently, the irreducible difference between the novel and the therapeutic process is in the distinction between the closed and open narratives. As Omer and Alon note, the "ideal ending" of a therapy cannot be imposed in a normative manner, since "the belief in one universal right ending is as groundless as the belief in one right therapy."[1790] Rather, the diversity of possible outcomes, styles, and cases necessarily prohibits positing a desired outcome for ending treatment. Instead of directing treatment toward an ideal ending, the concept of plot merely helps underline the ways in which, as for novels, "formlessness is a threat for any kind of therapy," but unlike novels, therapy does not always constitute a totalized whole.[1791] Rather than enclosing the client's life, these narrative concepts help emplot it by redirecting it toward personal growth. As I will argue in what follows, because it concentrates on the patient's inner life, this therapeutic *redirection* resembles novelistic character development rather than theatrical directing.

[1789] Ibid., Omer and Alon also propose a typology which, compares the various "stages" of therapeutic change with the Ancient Greeks' three major modes of dramatic plot development: *peripeteia*, *agon*, and *crisis.* First of all, therapy is based on the process of *reversal,* whose powerful consequences can change both the course and meaning of the treatment, to the point where "we expect to witness *peripeteia* in the treatment itself." In psychoanalysis, the sudden emergence of insight can also be considered a form of reversal, which leads the analysand to reinterpret, revise and re-color their whole previous experience in a new light. Secondly, therapy can involve a *contest* between "protagonist and antagonist, hero and villain, or thesis and antithesis," a "combative attitude" can be placed at the heart of action. Epston and White's "externalizing the problem" for instance is an explicit illustration of *agon* at the center of the therapeutic process, considering the problem as the treatment's "villain," against which the client's forces are mobilized." The Ericksonian utilizational method also fits this model, although instead of turning the problem into a villain, the operator depathologizes the symptom, reframing it as a provisional solution to an underlying, legitimate unconscious need. Finally, "*crises* are no less crucial for the psychotherapist than for the novelist or dramatist." The Freudian model especially places crisis at the heart of the cure, turning it into a therapeutic asset. Rather than an obstacle to be overcome or a sign of failure, crisis can be read as an opportunity for change. This typology is not meant to impose predetermined structures onto the therapeutic process but to underline commonalities in various theoretical models and emphasize the possible analogy between literary and therapeutic narrative. For the therapist, they help understand the various phases through which "at the end of a successful treatment, the client is possessed not only of a better account of his life, but also of a new script of problematic situations and of a positive narrative about the therapy." Ibid., 75-90.

[1790] Ibid., 106. For example, "Therapies that are conducted in a lighthearted mode cannot end like those in which a romantic or an epic tone prevail." Ibid. See also Alon's (1985) work on PTSD, where treatment reversed the expected order and placed the ending at the beginning: "clients expected the therapy to start with the trauma… many of them had already become so inured to this approach, that the mere mention of the trauma brought to their eyes an expression of endless fatigue. … Treatment should therefore reverse the expected order; rehabilitation should come first and elaboration of the trauma, last… Improvement became the condition for abreaction. The client had to be, functionally, no longer a post-traumatic in order to become eligible for it. In this manner, confrontation with the trauma was turned into the treatment's rite of conclusion. The beginning became the end." Omer and Alon, 106.

[1791] Ibid., 118.

4.1.2. Hypnotherapy as Immersive Narration

Hypnotherapy can be considered a form of narratively oriented therapy because it makes ample use of stories, both fictional and nonfictional, it challenges the problematic narratives at the origin of the patient's symptoms, and it is founded on the very acknowledgment and modification of these autosuggestions. But what sets it apart from other forms of "narrative therapy"?

Unlike Epston and White's narrative therapy, Lewis' narrative psychiatry, or the narrative branches of psychoanalysis, the specificity of hypnotherapy lies in the induction of an immersive, modified state of consciousness, which creates the experience of narrative absorption and allows the patient to experience stories from the inside while remaining capable of reverting to the exterior perspective from which she can examine them from without, to reevaluate, reinterpret, and in this sense, "rework" them. Just as every reading produces a different text, every hypnotic session can produce a different version of one's life story. Although the ability to "modify" the narrative plot might seem more akin to the work of the author than of the reader, the back and forth between internal and external points of view, and the impact of interpretation on the meaning of the text, are closely linked to the act of novel reading. "Re-storying" is first and foremost a process of re-reading.

The therapeutic benefits of hypnotherapy and its immersive narration are lacking in forms of therapy which operate exclusively from an external perspective—such as insight-based and cognitive models. Indeed, because they are based on interpretation and rational understanding, they do not rely on the value of immersivity or working directly with primary process thinking as hypnotherapists do. In hypnotherapy and novel reading on the other hand, the recipient reacts with their whole being, not merely their intellect. As I will show in this section, this immersion, and the emotional and unconscious responses which it elicits do not take away from the patient's own self-understanding, from their ability to narrate their experience or be "present" during the experience.

In this section, I will argue that hypnotic regression and its mirror image, hypnotic "age progression" should not be reduced to mere dramatic enactments and should instead be reconceptualized as complex forms of storytelling.[1792] In doing so, my goal is to propose a

[1792] Here I will therefore follow Michael Yapko's contention that symptom relief is "the most superficial and less sophisticated" use of hypnosis in the clinical setting. Yapko, 119.

counterargument to the mimetic conception of hypnosis which skims over the internal creative activity of the subject underlying the production of the outwardly observable hypnotic phenomena. Both in hypnotic regression and futurization, situations are imaginatively constructed and experienced *as if* they were actual. Once we recognize hypnotic regression and futurization in their aesthetic complexity, it becomes clear that narration in modern hypnosis radically questions the modes of quasi- or failed enunciation traditionally attributed to the hypnotic subject.[1793] Whereas overemphasis on the dramatic dimension portrays the subject as unreflectively absorbed in past or imaginary material (and thus being incapable of "reading" the events of her life), here the creative task of the subject lies in the balancing act of superimposing creative authorship and make-believe passivity, of both co-creating and giving oneself over to suggested, alternative possibilities of emplotment, and thus co-creatively elaborating them.[1794]

Besides the mere reenactment of trauma, hypnotherapy offers a multiplicity of narrative possibilities, in which the operator's suggestions act like basic scripts which the subject willfully and creatively develops, giving free reign to their imaginative composition, rather than obeying a set of commands or stage directions that are automatically enacted in the mechanical drama of psychological automatism. Acquiescing to the "realist illusion" of hypnosis leads one to unquestioningly consider regression and progression as an archaeological method of uncovering, or a deductive prediction of the subject's future. On the contrary, both hypnotic techniques must be thought of as indirect means of telling the *present* story of the client by taking a detour through fictionality that involves "traveling" across temporal lines. Hypnotic regression or futurization in this sense consist, as does novel reading, in imagining oneself *as another* by imaginatively shifting one's temporal "location."[1795] The dissociation produced in this process creates the same paradox found in novelistic fiction, in which—to use a Proustian image—the mind is both the explorer and

[1793] These mainly include blind abreaction in the hysterical patient or victim of PTSD (acting out without proper narrating), Multiple Personality Disorder (in which each split part fights for their own story), and automatic writing (in which we have a story with no author).

[1794] By picturing herself as experiencing various past or future events, the subject places herself in the position of a character, whose destiny seems to unfold automatically, and appears to act out (in strikingly realistic fashion) the operator's suggestions, although the subject is the one carrying out the imaginative work.

[1795] The parallel between hypnotic and novelistic temporality reveals the therapeutic value of apprehending, as in Augustine's description of threefold time, memory and expectations *via* the present, rather than naively assuming one can access an unmodified past (or yet inexistent future).

the explored territory.[1796] When immersed in hypnotic narratives, subjectivity is simultaneously inside and outside, past/future and present, narrator/author and character, which as Yi-Ping Ong observes, are double placements with important ethical repercussions for the subject.[1797] Therefore, reemphasizing this narrative dimension reinstates the subject as subject of enunciation and reveals the therapeutic and ethical value of the similarities shared by the hypnotic and novelistic imagination.

4.1.2.1 Hypnotic Regression: Looking Back on One's Life

The Archaeological View

Regression is often conceived as belonging to the "virtuoso," "advanced" hypnotic responses placed high on hypnotizability scales, supposedly requiring deep hypnotic trances in "skilled" subjects.[1798] In debates about the nature of hypnotic trance, it is often used as an example to question the social-psychological and compliance-expectations based explanations of hypnotic phenomena described in Chapter 1. Indeed, numerous examples describe the vividness of the experience and the powerful affective reactions which accompany it, seemingly resuscitating "authentic" earlier developmental states that remain unavailable in ordinary waking consciousness.[1799] Regression is often experienced "with all five senses functioning—seeing, hearing, etc.—and with abreaction and discharge of emotion."[1800] It is precisely this intensity which leads to the belief that "information can be obtained as to almost anything involved in the patient's difficulty or neurosis," and that hypnosis is thus "infinitely more rapid than the usual method of free association."[1801]

[1796] "What an abyss of uncertainty, whenever the find feels overtaken by itself; when it, the seeker, is at the same time the dark region through which it must go seeking." Proust *Remembrance of Things Past,* vol 1*,* trans. C. K. S. Moncrieff, T. Kilmartin, and A. Mayor (New York: Random House, 1981), 49.

[1797] When assuming the position of a novelistic author in relation to oneself *as character,* "one's attempts to inflect the whole of another person's life with value—requires one to taste the ambiguity of a human life from within, while at the same time incorporating into this first-person point of view insights that could be glimpsed only in retrospect from a third-person perspective." Ong, *The Art of Being,* 40.

[1798] Spanos, 41.

[1799] As Nash notes, when measures of subjective experience are taken during hypnotic regression, "subjects report that the experience of being a child is compellingly 'real'. These reports far exceed those of unhypnotized control subjects and have nothing to do with whether the hypnotic performance was observably and genuinely childlike." Nash, **"**What, if Anything, is Regressed About Hypnotic Age Regression? A Review of the Empirical Literature," *Psychological bulletin* 102, no.1 (1987): 43.

[1800] L. Lecron, "A Study of Age regression Under Hypnosis," *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* 2 (1954): 77.

[1801] Lecron, Ibid., 77.

Herbert Spiegel describes a case that illustrates the influence of regression on a 25-year-old man's linguistic abilities during a demonstration. When regressed to various ages of his childhood, the subject "responded without difficulty, until he was signaled to place himself back to his twelfth birthday":

> When asked for his name (as was done previously at older age levels), he responded with some confusion and tension but did not answer. When pressed for an answer, he looked about and inquiringly uttered a word that sounded like 'Vas?' It then became apparent that he did not understand English… At age 13 years, he had escaped from Vienna to the United States, and by the time he was 25 years old, his fluent English showed no trace of his native German tongue—a language that he had learned to despise to the extent that he had difficulty with both speaking and understanding it… From age 13 to 18 years, while under hypnotic regression, his spoken English revealed a gradually disappearing German accent.[1802]

According to Spiegel's analysis of this example, "the experiential intensity of the trance experience suggests an individual's capacity to get in touch with early foundation experiences," and his ability to "tap some earlier developmental experience."[1803]

The traditional conception of regression as "archaeological" is still frequent, even in the hypnotic literature of the twentieth and twenty-first century.[1804] Following Freud and Breuer's cathartic method and Janet's distinction between traumatic and narrative memory,[1805] it establishes the goal of hypnotherapy as the unveiling and integration, via narration, of repressed traumatic material. In the view of these practitioners, what began with Freud and Janet was "steadily refined through trial and error and anecdotal data," indicating that the "potent clinical tool" of regression has "stood the test of time."[1806] This conception is found in modern trauma work such as that of Judith Herman, whose *Trauma and Recovery* is criticized in Leys' *Trauma, a Genealogy.*[1807]

[1802] Spiegel and Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment.*, 33-34.

[1803] Ibid., 34.

[1804] Nevertheless, this "credulous" view is much less adhered to inside than outside the field: "It is interesting … that theorizing which states a structural link between imagery and perception has actually had more support in the nonhypnosis than in the hypnosis literature." Sheehan and Robertson, in G. Spanos et al, *Hypnosis and Imagination* (1996; London and New York: CRC Press, 2018), 2. See J. P. Sutcliffe, "'Credulous' and 'skeptical' views of hypnotic phenomena: A review of certain evidence and methodology," *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis,* 8 (1960): 73-101.

[1805] While the former merely and unconsciously repeats the past, the latter is able to narrate it *as past.* See Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* and Leys, *Critical Inquiry,* 647.

[1806] William Smith, "When All Else Fails: Hypnotic Exploration of Childhood Trauma," Lynn et. al. (eds.), *Casebook of Clinical Hypnosis* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), 129.

[1807] In Judith Herman's description of traumatic recovery, "the survivor tells the story of the trauma…She tells it completely, in depth and in detail. This work of reconstruction actually transforms the traumatic memory, so that it can be integrated into the survivor's life story." Judith L. Herman, *Trauma and recovery* (London: Pandora, 1992), 75-77. However, as Leys argues, in Janet's work with his patient Marie, it is the excision, the *forgetting* of the traumatic memory that cures her, not its retrieval via narration: "according to Janet's first account of the case and contrary to the ingrained beliefs of many of his commentators, Marie was cured not by the recovery of memory but by the excision of her imputed or reconstructed trauma (see *L'Automatisme Psychologique,* 7)." Leys, 650. As Leys notes, in 1894, Janet also criticized Breuer and Freud's account of the cathartic cure on the grounds that "what mattered

Similarly, Spiegel and Spiegel describe hypnotic regression as being "very useful in helping patients understand the origin of long forgotten bodily symptoms, such as conversion symptoms and somatic flashbacks."[1808] For them, it "help[s] patients recall dissociated memories" and helps "explain some present behaviors, such as a patient's disproportionate reactions to seemingly benign stressors."[1809] In such accounts, the archaeological metaphor is even used explicitly: "Many such individuals seem to retain layers of memories analogous to the layers of a city uncovered by archaeologists. These primitive reflexes and childish emotional responses remain stored in the unconscious."[1810] In other words, regression makes an authentic return to earlier developmental stages in the subject possible. [1811]

The ethical and therapeutic dangers of such a conception have been underlined, which can lead to retraumatizing certain patients[1812] who lack sufficient ego structure to undergo the painful affect unleashed by the "retrieval" of traumatic memories.[1813] As Horevitz notes, "vulnerabilities to uncontrolled ego regression must be taken seriously and precariously organized patients treated supportively until they can undertake expressive work."[1814]

In response to these criticisms, the modern conception of hypnosis attempts to distinguish itself from previous nineteenth-century models by arguing that the retrieval of hypnotic memory need not be traumatic in itself.[1815] In this view, "a number of hypnotic techniques can facilitate the

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in the treatment of the neuroses was not the 'confession' of the traumatic memory but its elimination." in Leys, "Shell Shock," 650. Nevertheless, this use of regression for "memory removal" is the equivalent of symptom removal for trauma but is far from exhausting the potential of hypnotic regression.

[1808] Spiegel and Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment,* 440.

[1809] Ibid., 440.

[1810] Ibid., 32.

[1811] See also: "When tested," regressed patients "respond to vocabulary questions like 2-year-olds, deny knowledge of the current president, and giggle when tickled as though they were children. Some even become nonverbal when regressed to age 6 months and may, without specific instruction, develop the grasp and rooting reflexes that characterize the partially developed nervous system of an infant." Ibid.

[1812] Risks commonly evoked include provoking psychotic episodes in predisposed patients or encouraging dissociation in patients diagnosed with Dissociated Identity Disorder (whose condition "involves underlying fragmentation of all the basic affective, cognitive, and behavioral structures whose integration is required for the development of self—, a naive and simplistic model of 'archeological' treatment (i.e., uncover the trauma, uncover the hidden dissociative states, and let love and trust heal the wounds) can pose more risks than benefits." Richard Horevitz, "The Treatment of a Case of Dissociative Identity Disorder," in Lynn et. al. (eds.), *Casebook of Clinical Hypnosis* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), 198.

[1813] Indeed, "not every patient…is a good candidate" for regression, as "facing memories that were held out of consciousness for good reason can be upsetting and even disorganizing. Worsening of symptoms instead of improvement may follow, unless the patient's personality resources are equal to the challenge." Smith, "When All Else Fails," 128.

[1814] Horevitz, Ibid., 128.

[1815] It is established nowadays that "patients need help achieving a controlled abreaction." Spiegel and Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment.* 450. In early Freudian cases, and in the use of hypnosis in the treatment of wartime neurosis, intense,

process of recovery of traumatic memories while still allowing patients to feel "in control."[1816] Positive transference and good rapport can in this sense enable a controlled, "mastered" abreaction instead of a chaotic one."[1817] In this way, the transference and nature of hypnotic rapport can be used to therapeutic advantage:

> In hypnosis, painful emotion can be limited: slowed, muted, and stopped, when necessary. …What happened no longer seems unreal, nor poorly understood, and the person is no longer detached or absent as if it all happened to someone else … the therapist helps the person recall and now "own" his or her experience.[1818]

In this conception, the therapist's role is not just to uncover, but also to "help patients control and structure the retrieval and expression of painful memories and feelings associated with them."[1819]

Therefore, the main danger of the archaeological conception as it manifests itself in modern hypnotherapy is that of inducing false or pseudo-memories, due to the mimetic dimension of hypnosis. In his paper "Hypnotic exploration of childhood trauma," William Smith observes that the very notion of trauma recovery is far from being controversy-free because "memory is so vulnerable to distortion, especially memory that has been elicited in a treatment context, that enormous harm can be done when such memories falsely identify an alleged perpetrator of abuse."[1820] This potential confusion of fantasy and memory stems from a double factor which

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dramatic experiences can be explained by preexisting expectations of both patients and doctors regarding the nature of hypnotic abreaction. Nowadays, a frequently used technique is for example that of the "split screen," where the patient projects images of traumatic memories on the left side of the "screen" and "something he or she did to protect themselves or someone else (e.g., fight back, scream, protest, lie still)" on the right side. Lynn et al., 70. This type of distancing technique "facilitates the process of separating memories from physically painful sensations to minimize traumatic abreaction or retraumatization" and "allows for the manipulation of the affect that invariably is mobilized during the retrieval of traumatic memories." Spiegel and Spiegel, 438. See also Erickson: "I like to initially regress my psychiatric patients to something pleasant, something agreeable. In the trance state I impress upon them that it is tremendously important to realize that there are some good things in their past, and those good things form the background by which to judge the severity of the present. And so I use the happy memories of their past to train them to recover fully and completely the various traumatic experiences." Erickson, *Experiencing Hypnosis,* 12.

[1816] Indeed, "many patients fear that if they allow traumatic memories to surface they will, once again, lose control, symbolically reenacting the helplessness experienced during the traumatic episode." Ibid.

[1817] Smith, **"**When All Else Fails," 129.

[1818] Ibid., 125.

[1819] Spiegel and Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment,* 437. A number of hypnotic techniques can be used to facilitate this "controlled recovery," such as relaxation techniques, projective techniques, and the "affect bridge" technique (in which a specific emotion triggered in the present serves as a "guide" toward an associated memory).

[1820] Smith, Ibid., 114. For Smith, it "has become controversial whether children subjected to traumatic experiences can become amnesic about the trauma and later recover the memories reasonably accurately through triggering life events, a therapy process, or hypnotically enhanced recall." Ibid., 113. Empirical studies have also disproven the accuracy of certain memories retrieved through regression. For example, Nash, Drake, Wiley, Khalsa, and Lynn (1986) attempted to corroborate the memories of participants in an experiment which involved "age regressing hypnotized and role-playing (control) participants to age 3 to a scene in which they were in the soothing presence of their mothers" in Lynn et al., *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis* (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2006), 203. During this experiment, "participants reported the identity of their transitional objects (e.g., blankets and teddy bears). Third-party verification (parent report) of the accuracy of recall was obtained for 14 hypnotized

affects all hypnotic—and as I argue all therapeutic[1821]—situations: the suggestive nature of the therapist's discourse on the one hand and the nature of memory itself on the other, which has "been shown to be a constructive process, in which memories and imaginings are mixed indistinguishably."[1822]

As Omer and Alon note, memories of childhood are but complex translations into the adult mind of what we believe to have happened. This explains why, often, in regression:

> We witness ourselves in the third person in a scene we could never have experienced (redescription)… we cannot think of childhood events without overlaying them with adult meanings (reinterpretation)… Finally, the values are invariably changed (reassessment)… Memory is thus circular: the past is used to help understand the present and vice-versa, with both being changed in the process.[1823]

Indeed, memory distortion can occur at any stage of its processing, "from acquisition, through retention, to retrieval," in hypnotic and ordinary situations alike.[1824] Memories are not simply retained and gradually lost but are "continuously modified by ongoing mental activity" as well as "permanently modified by new ones."[1825] In this sense, the original memory trace is irretrievable, having become "all but unrecoverable."[1826] Supporting this view, Leys has singled out the irretrievable aspect of original memories in the context of psychoanalysis and the retrieval of traumatic memories. As Leys shows, Freud was "the first to observe," in his early work on hysteria, that patients "lacked conviction as to the reality of the reconstructed traumatic scenes."[1827] For example, he notes that his pressure technique "causes thoughts to emerge which the patient will never recognize as his own, which he never remembers, although he admits that the context calls

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participants and 10 control participants. *Hypnotic participants were less able than control participants to identify the transitional objects actually used*. Hypnotic participants' hypnotic recollections matched their parents' reports only 21% of the time, whereas control participants' reports were corroborated by their parents 70% of the time." Ibid., 203, emphasis added.

[1821] Indeed, "false memories are certainly not limited to hypnosis and may be problematic in a variety of situational and therapeutic contexts." Ibid., 404.

[1822] Smith, "When All Else Fails," 117. Smith underlines the distortion of memory often found in hypnotic regression, and its varying degrees: "It is not true that the 'new' [retrieved] memories must be authentic. They may be mostly true, mostly untrue, or entirely untrue. To make matters worse, memories emerging in hypnosis may feel compellingly real because of the vividness of imagery and emotion that some people achieve in hypnosis." Ibid., 118. See also E. F. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1979).

[1823] Omer and Alon, 216-7. See Schafer's description of the hermeneutic circle involved in memory in Appendix A. Constrained by this hermeneutic circle, memory must involve reconstruction: "events cannot be recalled without being redescribed, reinterpreted and reassessed through a new context or leading narrative." Ibid., 216.

[1824] Ibid., 211. For example, in a study, Allport and Postman (1947) showed that "when a number of people are asked to relay serially what they saw in a visual stimulus involving a black man wearing a suit talking with a policeman who holds a razor after a few relays, the razor passes from the hand of the policemen to that of the black man, the suit turns into jeans and the conversation becomes a threat on the part of the black man." Ibid., 211.

[1825] Ibid., 211.

[1826] Ibid., 211- 212.

[1827] Leys, "Shell Shock,"644.

for them inexorably, and while he becomes convinced that it is precisely these ideas that are leading to the conclusion of the analysis and the removal of his symptoms."[1828] Whereas for Freud this was a reason to further pursue inquiry into the mechanics of resistance and thus "discover" psychoanalysis, modern hypnosis must embrace the impossibility of retrieving the "original" memories or material, traumatic or not. Indeed, as Leys explains, Freud's observation constitutes a "stunning admission of the inherent irretrievability of the traumatic 'event'."[1829]

Furthermore, the linguistic transposition involved in the mere act of reporting memories leads to even further distortion. As Omer and Alon note:

> Putting memories into words is no neutral act of translation: words seem to change the inner images, crystalizing them into a new form. With each new verbalization, people's confidence in the veracity of retrieved memories grows. Each time a witness is asked to identify a suspect, her confidence grows, independent of the truth of the accusation.[1830]

In addition to these various modes of distortion, empirical studies have called into question the phenomenon of hypnotic hypermnesia, disproving the alleged superiority of hypnotic memory over ordinary, waking memory.[1831] For example, "when subjects are asked under hypnosis to recall verifiable items, such as the day of the week of past birthdays or the names of former teachers and schoolmates, they do no better than subjects not under hypnosis."[1832]

[1828] Freud, "Studies on Hysteria," in *SE,* 2:272.

[1829] Leys, 645. Leys cites a longer passage which further develops Freud's difficulties: "The ideas which are derived from the greatest depth and which form the nucleus of the pathogenic organization are also those which are acknowledged as memories by the patient with greatest difficulty. Even when everything is finished and the patients have been over-borne by the force of logic and have been convinced by the therapeutic effect accompanying the emergence of precisely these ideas… they often add: 'But I can't remember having thought it'. It is easy to come to terms with them by telling them that the thoughts were unconscious. But how is this state of affairs to be fitted into our own psychological views? Are we to disregard this withholding of recognition on the part of patients, when, now that the work is finished, there is no longer any motive for their doing so? Or are we to suppose that we are really dealing with thoughts which never came about, which merely had a possibility of existing, so that the treatment would lie in the accomplishment of a psychical act which did not take place at the time? It is clearly impossible to say anything about this—that is, about the state which the pathogenic material was in before the analysis—until we have arrived at a thorough clarification of our basic psychological views, especially on the nature of consciousness." Freud, Ibid., 300. For Leys, this problem of the patient's "lack of confidence in the reality of the memory of the trauma," the "victim's inability to remember, and hence testify with conviction to, the facticity of the reconstructed event" will "haunt not only psychoanalysis but the entire modern discourse of the trauma." Leys, Ibid., 646.

[1830] Omer and Alon, 213. For an example of Piaget describing one of his own false memories, see Ibid, 213-214.

[1831] "Investigators who have carefully used conditions in which the experimenters do not know the hypotheses and proper motivational control groups have found no evidence for increased accuracy of recall… uniquely attributable to hypnotic-age-regression… most laboratory evidence to date seems to suggest that hypnosis does not yield meaningful increases in memory." Nash, "What, if Anything," 47.

[1832] Perry et al. 1991, in Omer and Alon, 222. Paradoxically, studies report that subjects who recall under hypnosis are more confident about their own accuracy, even when they are wrong (Dinges et al. 1987, Whitehouse et al. 1987). Ibid.

Finally, the suggestive dimension of hypnotic rapport or leading information unknowingly produced by observers in the experimental context easily produces memory distortion in subjects, who are "more amenable to influence by leading questions."[1833] For example, subjects watching a video of a minor traffic accident who are asked suggestive questions such as 'how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?' produce different descriptions of the event, reporting splintered glass when there was none, or if shown a video which contained splintered glass, took the latter for the original one.[1834] In the therapeutic context, where the patient's suggestibility is considerably increased, this preexisting ordinary process is amplified. Sarbin and Coe for instance have shown that when a client believes the hypnotist or therapist knows more than them, the situation becomes "highly conducive to believed imaginings."[1835] Conversely, the intensity of the subject's behavior under hypnosis can lead the therapist to take a narrative (or dramatic) truth for a historical one, creating a cycle of mutual influence.[1836] Therefore, the archaeological conception of regression, combined with the inherently suggestive nature of therapeutic rapport, risks eliciting memories that are "more fiction than fact," which, when confused with historical truths, can become a problematic source of concern with harmful ethical implications. Paradoxically, the confusion of hypnotic material and historical truth is both one of the most powerful therapeutic "effects" of hypnosis and one of its greatest dangers.

Residing neither in hypnotic excision nor in blind abreaction, the therapeutic value of regression in the case of trauma should thus be placed in its ability, via the deployment of the imagination, to help the patient "see the traumatic event from a new perspective, recognizing and accepting the helplessness imposed on them by the traumatic event, while at the same time crediting their efforts to protect themselves or somebody else."[1837] Far from mere wishful erasure or escapist reimagining of the past, this process constitutes an authentic form of "grief work" in which patients "acknowledge, bear, and put into perspective the loss of a sense of invulnerability, of health, or of loved ones." The goal of modern hypnotherapy is no longer the erasure or removal

[1833] Omer and Alon, 221. Because "hypnosis involves direct and indirect suggestions, some of which may be leading in nature, and "increase[s] confidence of recalled events with little or no change in the level of accuracy," therapists employing hypnosis must be "especially vigilant to the problem of false memory creation" American Medical Association 1985, in Lynn et al., 402.
[1834] Omer and Alon, 212.
[1835] Sarbin and Coe 1972, in Omer and Alon, 223.
[1836] See Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject.* As Lynn et al. note, "clients' memory reports during age regression, for example, can seem compelling because the reported images and emotions are vivid and intense. However, neither vividness nor emotionality can be taken as scientific evidence of historical veracity." Lynn et al., 402.
[1837] Spiegel and Spiegel, 442

of memories but their restorying and integration: "We don't erase the past, we change our interpretation of it," or in other words, "in restructuring an old life experience we are developing new associative pathways, facilitating new responses to the old fear-provoking life situation. *The old memories and pathways are still there. They will always be there*."[1838]

Questioning the Classical View

Narrative theory helps shed light on the nature of therapeutic efficacy. A narrative orientation shows that "uncovered" hypnotic material "carries conviction through its sensory and emotional richness" rather than its truth value.[1839]As long as regression is understood as an immersive game of make-believe, as a story representative of the present state and understanding of the client, ethical pitfalls can be avoided while maintaining therapeutic efficacy. Defending the value of regression even when the hopes of establishing with certainty the historical nature of its material are abandoned, reminds us of the *seriousness,* that is, the affective impact and transformative value, of fictional "untruths."

Replacing the dramatic with a narrative conception also allows us to extend the use of the technique well beyond the "unearthing" of traumatic memory. In fact, regression to "childhood states" was explored by hypnotists well before the invention of the diagnosis of PTSD in the 1980s by the American Psychological Association. In the late 1880s, Bernheim and Richet were already exploring its hallucinatory potential and effects on hypnotic behaviors:

> I say to him 'You are six years old, you are a child. Go and play with the boys'. He gets up, jumps about, makes a gesture as if taking marbles out of his pocket…He keeps up his play indefinitely, *with surprising activity, attention and precision of detail*.[1840]

[1838] Rossi, in Erickson and Rossi, *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook* (New York: Irvington Publishers*,* 1979), 240, emphasis added.

[1839] Omer and Alon, 220. An element which strengthens this point is the *spatial* nature of the metaphors used to induce regression, which often involve imagining traveling through space. See, for example**:** "the therapist can ask the patient to walk down a staircase, with each step representing a year in the past, or ask the patient to observe scenes on a stage of the past. Patients can also be given simple suggestions to 'go backward' in time. Yapko, 1993, 296. See also Alden's (1995) "variation of the bubble technique in which suggestions are given to 'float back to an event and review it from the safety of the bubble,'" in Lynn et al., *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis*, 63.

[1840] Richet 1883, in Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics* 59, emphasis added. Even in Bernheim's short example, therapeutic benefits are attributed directly to the "childlike" state created under hypnosis, in its ability to remove the psychogenic: "He plays tag, and leap-frog, making jump after jump over one or two imaginary playfellows, increasing the distance each time, and *with an ease which in the waking condition, would not be possible, because of his malady."* Ibid., 59.

As demonstrated in this example, hypnotic regression does not systematically involve abreaction or high levels of affective distress. Here, the association with "play" makes it more akin to the fictional games of make-believe described by Walton in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the "attention and precision of detail" which Richet notes is a strong indicator of the activity of the subject engaged in an imaginative exercise.

In modern hypnosis, the therapeutic potential of this playful dimension is also preserved. In addition to "uncovering" repressed material, other functions of regression include revisiting *consciously remembered* memories, for ego strengthening purposes, or as an inductive technique.[1841] Whether the memories in question are pleasant or unpleasant, establishing their "fictional"—or at the very least, unverifiable—dimension becomes a crucial ethical safety-net which prevents one from falling into the trap of the "realist illusion" of hypnosis. This narrative safeguard forces hypnosis to abandon its own "seduction theory" and to draw therapeutic benefits from the effects of stories rather than history, as one would in reading narrative literature, as opposed to theoretical essays.

Empirical research has supported the "as if" dimension of regression, showing that "age-regressed participants behave according to situational cues and their knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about age-relevant behaviors."[1842] Even adherents of the archaeological model admit that subjects "use this technique as a form of 'role-playing' events, *as if* "they are happening all over again."[1843] Significantly, such studies show that subjects don't manifest behavior and mental states typical of the age to which they are regressed. Rather, they produce adult interpretations of *what that would be like*. For example, in a 1959 study in which a group of adults was regressed to age 4, participants were placed in a sand box and handed a lollipop with the candy side facing toward them. The adults "invariably picked the lollipop by the candy side without bothering about

[1841] For instance, it can be used to "invite a patient to revisit a well-remembered past event with the goal of examining how she coped, in order to cope more effectively in response to future events." Lynn et al., *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis*, 74. It can also be used to "recall or revivify some meaningful episode from the past" in which "resources are identified and named, such as courage, creativity, or perseverance, and then… to integrate those resources … in such a way that those resources would lead to new helpful perspectives, reactions, and behaviors." Yapko, *Trancework,* 416. In Joan Murray-Jobsis' technique of "renurturing," it is used to create an imaginary restitution for the patient's "missing nurturing environmental history" during very early childhood, by allowing both patient and therapist to "play out in imagery the parent and child roles that can promote a renurturing healing process." Joan Murray-Jobsis, "Hypnosis with a Borderline Patient," in Lynn et. al. (eds.), *Casebook of Clinical Hypnosis,* 179. For Murray-Jobsis, this corrective technique can be used for patients with diagnoses of personality disorders, dissociative disorders, and psychotic disorders. Ibid.

[1842] Lynn et al., *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis,* 74.

[1843] Spiegel and Spiegel, 440, emphasis added.

their dirty [sandy] hands."[1844] A recent replication of the study, however, used a control group composed of actual 4-year-olds, who all "picked up the lollipop by the stick."[1845] Paradoxically, hypnotic subjects become so absorbed in the experience of being a child that they lose critical judgment, which results in anachronisms that are obvious to unhypnotized individuals. While regressed to the age of 6 years, for instance, a hypnotized subject writes, "I am conducting a psychological experiment which will assess my psychological capacity" in childlike printing but with perfect spelling.[1846]

Psychoanalytic theories of hypnosis also support the "fictional" status of regressed material. In "What, if Anything, is Regressed About Hypnotic Age Regression?" for example, Michael Nash argues that "there is no evidence for the idea that hypnosis enables subjects to accurately reexperience the events of childhood or to return to developmentally previous modes of functioning."[1847] For Nash, if there is anything regressed about hypnosis, it does not involve the literal return to a past developmental state, since the "hypnotically regressed subject's response does not resemble that of children, and when it does, waking control subjects can do just as well."[1848] Rather, Nash argues that "some aspects of hypnotic response are similar to manifestations of primitive thinking in a nonhypnotized adult population."[1849] In other words, hypnotized subjects are not adults who "go back in time" but adults who "experience a shift towards more prelogical, primary process modes of thinking."[1850] Regression in this sense is *topographic*, not temporal. The psychoanalytic theory of hypnosis thus confirms that regression by no means involves traveling *to* the past or returning to a previous developmental stage but rather leads to adopting more creative modes of organizing ideational material.

What Does Regression Really Do? The Therapeutics of "Lost Time."

[1844] Reiff and Scherer 1959, in Omer and Alon, 222.
[1845] Omer and Alon, 222.
[1846] Orne 1951, in Nash, 43.
[1847] Nash, "What, if Anything," 49.
[1848] Ibid., 49. In other words, "if regression is defined as the extent to which hypnotized subjects conform to childhood norms and control subjects do not, then the mental and physiological activity of hypnotically age-regressed subjects is not regressed; it appears to be essentially adult." Regression merely involves "an increase in primary process thinking and a more spontaneous and intense expression of affect, unburdened by logic and sequential thinking." Ibid., 42; 50.
[1849] Ibid.50.
[1850] Ibid.50.

The therapeutic value of regression—of imagining oneself as a younger version of oneself, as a child or in a past situation—reconceptualized as a form of serious pretense, can be summarized in a remark from Roustang: "The imagination would thus have the power to transform our history, that is, our past as it appears to us in the present."[1851] Paradoxically, this conception, in which the imaginary *does* bring about changes in actuality, both undermines and *confirms* the "truth" and efficacy of regression, which is directly linked to the aesthetic capacity to become absorbed in an aesthetic illusion and acts of make-believe.[1852]

This imaginative exercise allows adults to access a position of *unknowing* and to temporarily experience what it feels like to *become* what one believes to be merely imitating. It creates a "refamiliarization" with the openness of childhood subjectivity. As Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei has shown, the "childhood mind" escapes the *telos* of adulthood and the rigidity of its conceptual distinctions.[1853] This mode of being can be a rich source of therapeutic change, since it "reopen[s] this fluidity which, when recaptured in literature, provides glimpses into the constitution of quotidian life as well as its potential reconfiguration."[1854] Childlike imagination, conceived as openness to the ongoing possibility of the transformation of the self and thus of reality, is therapeutically valuable in that it remains faithful to "a constant and, from the mature point of view, *radical openness.*"[1855] What the adult aims to recapture in the reveries of childhood is "also the sense of lost possibilities … the *open thread of adventure which, when re-engaged,*

[1851] ("L'imagination aurait donc le pouvoir de transformer notre histoire, c'est-à-dire notre passé tel qu'il nous apparaît dans le présent.") Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?*, 130. As Roustang adds, memory converts itself into imagination, which enables change and can only in this sense be considered as a form of "rewriting" the past: "Just as the epigenetic can modify the genetic, memory reconverts into imagination, and will give the latter greater force to modify our history." Ibid., 132.

[1852] In hypnosis, these effects first and foremost manifest themselves in the reality of the body (with ideomotor phenomena) and in cognitive phenomena such as hallucinations, which are experienced as the direct effects of the operator's language.

[1853] See Freud, for the link between creative writing, fantasy and childhood: "When the child has grown up and has ceased to play, and after he has been labouring for decades to envisage the realities of life with proper seriousness, he may one day find himself in a mental situation which once more undoes the contrast between play and reality….the growing child, when he stops playing, gives up nothing but the link with real objects; instead *of playing*, he now *phantasies*. He builds castles in the air and creates what are called *daydream," and "*a piece of creative writing, like a day-dream, is a continuation of, and a substitute for, what was once the play of childhood." Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," (1908), in *SE,* 9:144-45; 152.

[1854] Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian: Phenomenological Sightings in Modern Art and Literature* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), 43.

[1855] Gosetti-Ferencei, Ibid., 54. Indeed, "the order of everyday life, and its *vulnerability to transformation"* are not opposed forces in the child experience (ibid, emphasis added).

goes even farther than memories of our own childhood."[1856] Similarly, as Gaston Bachelard writes in a description of reverie that applies well to regression, "a potential childhood is within us. When we go looking for it in our reveries, we relive it even more in its possibilities than in its reality."[1857] Far from the infantile aggression described in Kleinian or Freudian analysis, here regression to childhood is an enrichment, rather than impoverishment, of our capacities:

> When adults observe children at play, accompany children caringly through the world, or engage in the literary imagination of childhood, they experience at best not a regression into childishness … but rather glimpses of an alternative to present reality, reminders of the capacity to form new ideas and be open to new ways of interpreting things.[1858]

In this sense, childhood, as opposed to "childishness," is the state of freedom from the "fixed conceptuality and habit" of ordinary consciousness, as well as a "persistent source, when revivified in adulthood, for the revitalization of quotidian life."[1859]

However, in order to specify the description of this transformative potential of an imaginative return to childhood, the aesthetic complexity of hypnotic regression, which is elided by the dramatic conception, must be examined more closely. Indeed, the comparison between hypnotic and novelistic temporality reveals that literature allows for similar "access-ways" to the past as hypnosis, supporting the narrative aspect of the technique.

Hypnotic regression can be carried out in two "modes," which can alternate or coexist. In the first mode, it is produced in the "past tense," in what is called *dissociated* regression (or hypnotic revivification). Here, experience is witnessed from "without," as the subject pictures herself as if she were an onlooker, while remaining aware of her present situation both in space and time.[1860] Dissociated regression allows the subject to experience a double perspective on her

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[1856] Ibid., 54, emphasis added. Although it "cannot be immediately accessed"—even if regression can recreate the experience of such an access—Gosetti links the childhood consciousness with the aesthetic and with transformation in itself, describing it as "one model for what has been called here the 'ecstatic quotidian'." Ibid, 43. In her citation of a passage describing Walter Benjamin's childhood, in which chasing butterflies involves "becoming one" with the object of perception, the immersion and merging of the boundary between self and other strongly resembles the aesthetic absorption described by Benson: "the more I nestled, in all fibers of my being, against the animal, the more butterfly-like I became inside … and in the end, it was as if capture was the price through which alone I could regain my human existence." Benjamin, in Gosetti, 47. See also Erickson's numerous analogies with the process of learning acquired in childhood (walking, speech, writing, etc.).

[1857] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie,* trans. Russel (Boston: Beacon 1960), 86. ("Une enfance potentielle est en nous. Quand nous allons la retrouver en nos rêveries, plus encore que dans sa réalité, nous la revivons en ses possibilités." Bachelard, Ibid., 86; 101 in Gosetti.

[1858] Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian,* 57, emphasis added.

[1859] Ibid., 59-60.

[1860] A whole spectrum of degrees of proximity and distance can be utilized, depending on the case: "Suggestions can be given for patients to (a) have their inner self watch events from a distance or from a different perspective or mental point of view)…; (b) interrupt the mental tape, make it run backward from different points, then fast forward and give

life events: from without, it resembles the narrator's perspective, which is able to survey and navigate temporally and spatially at will, entering and exiting various episodes of the diegetic world. In the second mode, regression is carried out in "the present tense," in what is called *associated* regression, where the subject has the impression of reliving past events from a first-person perspective, as if it were occurring in the present.

Similarly, the genre of the novel allows for the selection or combination of these two "poles," either inserting a large temporal "gap" between the subject of narration and the subject of experience in past tense third-person narration, or narrating events in the first person, present tense, thereby coming very close to associated hypnotic regression.[1861] Furthermore, just as a literary text has a narratorial presence, no matter how imperceptible, a subject in associated regression retains awareness of the present, even if it remains preconscious or in the background, like Hilgard's hidden observer.

This awareness is acknowledged even in hypnotic theories that reduce the subject to a mere automaton. For example, Bernheim observes about a subject who reexperiences—and acts out—the battle of Gravelotte in the 1870s that he was both "here and there," experiencing past events and obeying present instructions, understanding and responding to present cues. The subject was even able to navigate between various roles or positions in time, demonstrating complex aesthetic awareness:

> In living this part of his life over again, S---- doubles his personality so to speak. He puts questions, and gives answers, all at the same time; he speaks for himself and for the others. … He dreams the drama that has been suggested to him, regarding himself as with his comrades in his former existence, repeating aloud what they say to him, what he answers, and gesticulating, as if he were at once the spectator and actor.[1862]

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the scene a different ending; (c) watch events first from the viewpoint of a dispassionate observer, before entering the scene; (d) make the scene become brighter, dimmer, or out of focus; (e) change the characteristics of key persons (e.g., become smaller or larger—feet can grow to ridiculous proportions like a clown's) so that their threatening aspects are neutralized; (f) stop and start the tape repeatedly; (g) restructure the memory until different feelings develop or actively cultivate different feelings (e.g., anger vs. fear) while watching the tape; (h) shuttle back and forth between the traumatic incident and a memory of an incident in which the patient felt in control, safe, and secure; and (i) contain disturbing memories between sessions in a file drawer, locked vault, or in a special holding room." Lynn et. al, *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis,* 168.

[1861] As Dorrit Cohn points out, some novels use "dissonant narration" where an ironic gap separates them (Cohn, 150). Cohn's notion of "consonant narration" would be (as in Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*) adapted to *associated regression.* Cohn, *Transparent Minds,* 161.

[1862] Cohn, Ibid., 65. While imagining himself in Dijon on garrison duty, at the coffee-house with his comrades, Bernheim asks "Where are you, S?' / 'I am at Dijon'. / 'Who am I'? 'You are Dr. Bernheim. But I cannot be at Dijon, for you are at St. Charles Hospital at Nancy. That cannot be! Here are my comrades. No, I do not know you." Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 65. Here the subject uses trance logic to make sense of the double, incompatible, realities, thereby clearly demonstrating his awareness of both levels.

This is clearly a reenactment involving narration, a play which is *put on* in make-believe rather than a blind repetition that occurs mechanically and automatically.

Whereas associated regression leans more strongly toward dramatic acting out and cathartic abreaction, dissociated regression bares more resemblance with novelistic subjectivity, and pulls regression back toward the anti-mimetic pole. Indeed, in dissociated regression, the subject looks upon his "self" as a narrator would upon a character caught in the "necessity" of a narrative arc or plot line. Whereas the "past" character's perspective is limited both in space and in time, the "present" perspective is more informed and can look back with "cognitive privilege" over the subject of experience. This process is an important characteristic of literary traditions of self-narration, as in Rousseauian confession and, of course, Proustian remembrance.

The best example of a spontaneous Proustian "regression" or emergence of an involuntary memory is not the episode of the madeleine but that of the uneven paved stones ("*les pavés mal équarris*") in the courtyard of the hôtel de Guermantes:

> I had entered the courtyard of the Guermantes' mansion and in my absent minded state I had failed to see a car which was coming towards me; the chauffeur gave a shout and I just had time to step out of the way, but as I moved sharply backwards I tripped against the uneven paving-stones in front of the coach-house. And at the moment when, recovering my balance, I put my foot on a stone which was slightly lower than its neighbour, all my discouragement vanished and in its place was that same happiness which at carious epoch of my life had been given to me by the sight of trees which I had thought that I recognized in the course of a drive near Balbec, by the sight of the twin steeples of Martinville, by the flavour of a madeleine dipped in tea, and by those other sensations which I have spoken of and of which the last works of Vinteuil had seem to me to combine the quintessential character.[1863]

The joy is the same as in the episode of the madeleine, except that the "difference, purely material; lay in the images evoked."[1864] As the images of Venice begin to spontaneously arise on the mode of alterity and exteriority,[1865] attempts to use conscious volition to remember fail, in a mnesic emptiness that the text dramatizes with the temporal pause containing the effort to try and remember:

> As afraid to move as I had been on the earlier occasion when I had continued to savor the taste of the madeleine while I tried to draw into my consciousness whatever it was that it recalled to me—I continued, ignoring the evident amusement of the great crowd of chauffeurs to stagger as I had staggered a few seconds

[1863] Proust, *Time Regained,* 898-99. (See : **"**Au moment où … je posai mon pied sur un pavé qui était un peu moins élevé … tout mon découragement s'évanouit devant la même félicité qu'à diverses époques de ma vie m'avaient donnée la vue d'arbres que j'avais cru reconnaître dans une promenade en voiture autour de Balbec, la vue des clochers de Martinville, la saveur d'une madeleine trempée dans une infusion, tant d'autres sensations dont j'ai parlé et que les dernières œuvres de Vinteuil m'avaient paru synthétiser." *Le Temps Retrouvé,* in *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (Paris: Garnier Classiques, 2017), 153-155).

[1864] Proust, Ibid., 899.

[1865] **"**A profound azure intoxicated my eyes impressions of coolness, of dazzling light, swirled round me." Ibid. Similarly, Combray emerges from a cup.

> ago, with one foot on the higher paving-stone and the other on the lower. Every time I repeated this physical moment, I achieved nothing; but if I succeeded, forgetting the Guermantes party, in recapturing what I had felt when I first placed my feet on the ground in this way, again the dazzling and indistinct vision fluttered near me, as if to say: "Seize me as I pass if you can, and try to solve the riddle of happiness which I set you."[1866]

When the images finally appear, the comic effect ceases and conscious volition can let automatism take over, allowing the images to unfold spontaneously:

> And almost at once I recognized the vision: it was Venice, of which my efforts to describe it and the supposed snapshots taken by memory had never told me anything, but which the sensation which I had once experienced as I stood upon two uneven stones in the baptistery of St Marks had, recurring a moment ago, restored to me complete with all the other sensations linked on that day to that particular sensation, all of which had been waiting in their place—from which with imperious suddenness a chance happening had caused them to emerge—in the series of forgotten days. In the same way the taste of the little madeleine had recalled Combray to me.[1867]

Once inside the Guermantes' mansion, the mechanism of association between both "images d'azur" is set in motion, and with the emergence of the spontaneous memory of the beach at Balbec, the vividness of the impressions and sensations lead to the temporal confusion between past and present, as in hypnotic regression:

> A new azure vision passed before my eyes; but an azure that this time was pure and saline and swelled into blue and bosomy undulations, and *so strong was this impression that the moment to which I was transported seemed to me to be the present moment:* more bemused than on the day… I thought that the servant had just opened the window on to the beach and that all things invited me to go down and stroll along the promenade while the tide was high.[1868]

Here the confusion ("*hébété*") is exactly that of an *associated* regression, in which temporal lines are momentarily blurred, as in a phenomenon of *déja-vu*.[1869] The chance encounter of the physical sensations trigger the association between memory-past sensation, and present situation: with both touch ("The napkin which I had used to wipe my mouth had precisely the same degree of stiffness and starchiness as the towel with which I had found it so awkward to dry my face … at Balbec"),[1870] and vision of color (it "concealed within its smooth surfaces and its folds—the

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[1866] Proust, 899.
[1867] Ibid., 899-900.
[1868] Ibid., 900. See also: "I seemed to be in the railway carriage again … until I had time to remember where I was." Ibid., 900-901.
[1869] See also the hallucinatory dimension of the Proustian description: "And if the present scene had not been victorious, I believe that I should have lost consciousness; for so complete are these resurrections of the past during the second that they last, that they not only oblige our eyes to cease to see the room which is near them in order to look instead at the railway bordered with trees or the rising tide, they even force our nostrils to breathe the air of places which are in fact a great distance away, and out will to choose between the various projects which those distant places suggest to us, they force our whole self to believe that it is surrounded by these places or at least to waver doubtfully between the, and the place we now are, in a dazed uncertainty such as we feel sometimes when an indescribably beautiful vision presents itself to us at the moment of our falling asleep." Ibid., 908.
[1870] Ibid., 901

plumage of an ocean green and blue like the tail of a peacock").[1871] In this unfolding, it is a whole section of the past that produces or "upholds" ("*soulevait*") these colors,[1872] which Marcel was unable to enjoy in Balbec, but once remembered, lead to the present affective reaction, here the joyful feeling: "which now, freed from what is necessarily imperfect in external perception, pure and disembodied, caused me to swell with happiness."[1873] In the case of these three examples of Venice with the paved stones, Balbec and the napkin and Combray with the Madeleine, the sensation which triggers the emergence of the past memory seems like an unexpected, almost arbitrary cause, and thus destines all conscious attempts at voluntarily remembering to failure: "the sensation of the uneven paving-stones, the stiffness of the napkin, the taste the madeleine had reawakened in me had no connection with what I frequently tried to recall myself of Venice, Balbec, Combray with the help on an undifferentiated memory."[1874]

The spontaneous and involuntary dimension of regression substantiates the claim that Proustian memory is more hypnotic than Freudian, unlike what is suggested by J.Y. Tadié in *Le Lac Inconnu*.[1875] Indeed. both types of memory can be seen as founded on a certain degree of "psychological automatism," rather than repression. It is not surprising that regression, like Proustian involuntary memory, can occur spontaneously, unsought, with the mere induction of trance. As Erickson observes, regression is indeed "often present as an epiphenomenon of the early stage of trance development. ... In this first stage of learning to experience an altered state, many uncontrolled things happen, including spontaneous age regression."[1876] In this case, as in Proust, an external trigger creates a sensation, the element to which the memory "latches on" to emerge in the present. Proust emphasizes the "extreme difference" between the "real" and "false" impression one has of an object: while the latter is the product of voluntary searching, the former emerges spontaneously.[1877]

[1871] Ibid. ("et maintenant…elle déployait, réparti dans ses plis et dans ses cassures, le plumage d'un océan vert et bleu comme la queue d'un paon," *TR,* 155).
[1872] "what I found myself enjoying was not merely these colours but a whole instant of my life *on whose summit they rested*." Ibid., 901.
[1873] Ibid.
[1874] Ibid., 902
[1875] Jean-Yves Tadié, *Le Lac Inconnu*: *Entre Proust et Freud* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012).
[1876] Erickson, *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook*, 18.
[1877] "l'extrême différence qu'il y a entre l'impression vraie que nous avons eue d'une chose et l'impression factice que nous nous en donnons quand volontairement nous essayons de nous la représenter." *TR,* 155 ("The vast distance between a real impression which we have had of a thing and the artificial impression of it which we form for ourselves when we attempt by an act of will to imagine it." Ibid., 902).

Hypnotic trance thus serves the same function as Proustian chance (the "*hasard*" which prefigures the surrealist *rencontre)*, as well as the famously hypnagogic opening of the *Recherche*: it facilitates the emergence of the past without constituting a voluntary search.[1878] Involuntary memory and regression involve similar forms of letting go, a *laisser faire* which is the *sine qua non* of the spontaneous emergence of "lost" material.

As François Roustang notes, non-intervention is the vital condition for the general success of both hypnotic inductions and the therapeutic work. Without it, the subject remains stuck in the sterility of voluntary inquiry, which as Proust has shown us, dooms us to failure.[1879] The following example drawn from one of Erickson's case histories clearly illustrates this strong difference between voluntary and involuntary remembrance, between both modes of apprehending unconscious material:

> When one woman was asked about her earliest memory, for example, she first responded with one that was long familiar to her. When she was encouraged to explore further, she paused for a few moments, manifesting that inner focus we call the common everyday trance, and then quietly remarked how she seemed to be looking up at a bright light, with nothing else in focus. A moment later her left leg began levitating, while the rest of her body remained immobile but noticeably relaxed. She then reported that she felt a scream building up in her throat. With that she suddenly shook her head, shuffled her body, and obviously reoriented to the awake state. In her inner search for an earlier memory she had spontaneously fallen into a trance and momentarily experienced a genuine age regression to infancy, when her visual field and her body were apparently not entirely under voluntary control, and she felt herself about to cry as an infant might. That frightened her, so she spontaneously reoriented to the awake state.[1880]

This example shows the strong difference between voluntary searching and the spontaneous emergence of unconscious material. For Roustang, the non-intervention seen in the latter is the condition of *all* hypnotic phenomena, not just those in which the subject has the impression of encountering past material. Hypnosis achieves a paradoxical voluntary passivity, where, as in Chinese calligraphy, action stems from inaction:

> Non-action is the moment which opens up toward action, it is its immediate preparation. … If non-action occurs, action will emerge from it, not by magic but as a certain consequence. At the heart of non-action, one

[1878] Even in the madeleine episode, rather than a simple binary between voluntary and involuntary remembrance, a form of intermediate inquiry occurs, which can be described as a special kind of attention which situates itself in between both extremes.

[1879] In the opening lines of the preface to *Contre Sainte-Beuve,* Proust already wrote: "Everyday, I give less value to the intelligence. Everyday, I realize that it is outside of it that the writer is able to grasp something of our impressions, something of himself, the only material of art. What the intelligence gives us and calls the past, is not of the past" ("Chaque jour j'attache moins de prix à l'intelligence. Chaque jour je me rends compte que c'est en dehors d'elle que l'écrivain peut ressaisir quelque chose de nos impressions, c'est-à-dire atteindre quelque chose de lui-même et la seule matière de l'art. Ce que l'intelligence nous rend sous le nom de passé n'est pas de lui"). See Marcel Proust, *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1988).

[1880] Rossi, in *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook*, 55.

> merely has to wait. The laws of calligraphy (which apply to all action) consist in creating emptiness, and letting movement occur. … Emptiness, in this sense, is the principle from which emerges action.[1881]

Nevertheless, despite their spontaneous manifestation, in both Proustian involuntary memory and hypnotic regression, there is a paradoxical distance-simultaneity between past and present selves, or Marcel and the narrator. Proustian remembrance and hypnotic regression are equally narrative. As Gosetti-Ferencei notes, "it must not be assumed then that there is a single core of childhood experience which Proust's narrator is able to recover."[1882] Indeed, Proust's "revivifications of child-consciousness" are systematically interwoven with "post-childhood capacities for reflection, linguistic expression, and aesthetic form."[1883] As André Breton puts it in the first *Surrealist Manifesto,* "the desire for analysis overshadows sentiment."[1884]

As in dissociated regression, "in the act of remembering, we sit astride time, living both in the present and in the past."[1885] However, since "each recollection involves a reconstitution and a reinterpretation," in Proust's *Recherche* the context of remembrance adds inevitably to what is remembered.[1886] Hypnotic regression *literalizes* this novelistic process by using dissociation to create a juxtaposition of both temporal positions of the narrating and experiencing "I." For example, this can be noted in a description produced by one of Erika Fromm's patients:

> Such vivid memories … I haven't thought of these things in years. I remembered as a child going down the wooden steps to the beach, to avoid the poison ivy, running on the sand, picking seashells smeared with clay … then jumping in the water. I could see the wave ripples in the sand … clumps of water grass and brownish-speckled fish. I had such a good feeling. … Then I was sitting with the family under a maple tree, eating something and looking down at the grownups sitting on Grandpa's homemade log furniture, eating cookies, drinking tea, and talking a kind of Russian Yiddish with a little German and English thrown in.[1887]

[1881] Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que,* 159. ("le non-agir est le moment de l'ouverture vers l'agir, il en est la préparation immédiate. … Si le non-agir est réalisé, l'agir va en sortir non comme par enchantement mais comme conséquence certaine. Au sein du non-agir, il suffit d'attendre. 'Les lois de la calligraphie (Valables pour toute action) consistent à faire le vide et laisser bouger. … Le vide, en ce sens, est donc situé au principe de l'action"). Here is a much more accurate and subtle description of hypnotic automatism than the pathologizing one inherited from Janet. For Roustang, this *laisser faire* must also be embodied by the therapist and is a condition for the emergence of therapeutic change: "Change in the patient is conditional upon the non-involvement of the therapist in the change. It is not the latter's action that does the work, it is the patient's own capacity, which he lets emerge. Once the therapist has tried everything and failed, once he has given up, the patient's freedom is born; he no longer suffocates under the solicitude and good intentions that were being used as an illusory crutch." Ibid., 159; 144.

[1882] Gosetti, 84.

[1883] Ibid., 83.

[1884] "Le désir d'analyse l'emporte sur les sentiments." Breton, 315.

[1885] Omer and Alon, 125.

[1886] Ibid.

[1887] in Brown and Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis*, 14.

Like an absent or imperceptible narrator, the remembering "I" lets the images unfold spontaneously and "automatically," but remains distinct from the experiencing "I," even in cases where they seem to overlap and become difficult to separate, as in the clause "I had such a good feeling." Indeed, "awareness of the fictionality" of regression remains, even in associated regression. For example, Erickson's Patient "Jill" is able to comment on this temporal juxtaposition during the trance state:

> J: I do too. It is not the me now, it is probably the childhood thing. As a child I was always put down. That's it! That's where it comes from. It's as though the tears I feel coming now are not me here now crying. It is the child-feeling from long, long ago. It is an old, old feeling that is coming out now.[1888]

Even here, when the subject's center of experience is in the past and leads her to express herself in the present tense, temporal complexity is preserved. In the transcription of a patient with a fear of flying, one notes a similar awareness of the gap which separates past and present perspectives and manifests itself in a series of meta-narrative interrogations:

> It is a cloudy day and I am in a car with my parents and my sister. I don't know where my brother is. I'm wearing, I can't think of what I am wearing. I'm wearing a cotton pinafore like dress, but I don't understand why I am wearing that dress when it is so cloudy outside. We were going to my grandmother's and my grandfather's and it is, how did I know it was Sunday? It's Sunday, how could I tell? … It is Sunday afternoon. We are going over to my grandmother's and grandfather's and my grandmother has promised me chicken noodle soup for lunch. And we are in a blue car. I wonder if my parents had a blue car? They must have. This is like a newsreel in my mind. Events are happening in my mind… We are driving down the road, and it's the Sacramento River Bridge. My mother is unhappy about something, and she asked me to sit back in the seat. I don't know why, maybe Diane and I were playing. I'm sitting back in the seat and I'm looking out straight ahead.[1889]

In his description of this case history, Erickson makes an important commentary: "That *this is something more than a simple recall* of a lost memory is indicated by the fact that she reports it as a newsreel in my mind, wherein it seemed to come to her autonomously as an unconscious process unfolding itself spontaneously, *rather than a labored effort* of the conscious mind to remember."[1890] As in Proustian remembrance, the difference between voluntary and "spontaneous" memory is at the heart of the hypnotic, regressive experience.

The constitutive anti-mimetic awareness that remains active in the subject is what leads hypnotists to purposefully create shifts between temporal positions in order to strengthen the "realist illusion" of regression and manipulate the subject's "focal point," alternating between past and present tense. As Erickson notes about one of his patients, "at a critical point I shift tense from

[1888] in Erickson and Rossi, *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook,* 267.
[1889] Ibid., 238.
[1890] Ibid., 240.

the past (When was that? Where were you?) to the present (Who is in the room?). This shift in tense is an important approach to facilitating an actual age regression ... her responses after that shift tend to imply she is reexperiencing the past."[1891]

Therefore, hypnotic regression can and should be thought of as the patient's immersive re-telling and re-reading of her story, no matter how intense the apparent "confusion" (Proust's *hébétement*) or "illusory" dimension of the experience.[1892] As in other narrative therapies, in hypnotic regression the client becomes the "active describer" rather than the "passive victim" of her experience. In permissive models of hypnosis, the therapist does *not* adopt the role of author but at best, co-narrates by participating in form-giving and emplotment: "Without making leading statements that could shape or distort the memory, the therapist can help in ordering the elements of what happened."[1893] In hypnotic regression, "time travel" illuminates not the past itself, but its *present* re-reading, under a different light. Strictly speaking, the client need not believe in the actuality of the "uncovered" material for the experience to have therapeutic value.[1894] As with fiction, working through symbolic, evocative, or narrative material—of which we bracket the question of historicity or truth value—can be just as powerful as believing in its historical nature, especially when affective responsiveness is involved. Like Charles in Walton's example,[1895] genuine (sometimes unbearable) affect can remain within the bounds of the contractual framework,

[1891] Ibid.,120.

[1892] Taking this "hébétement" for *bêtise* (stupidity) thus manifests the very credulity which one believes to be exempt from, and underestimates the aesthetic complexity of hypnotic phenomena, as well as the aesthetic capacities of the hypnotic subject.

[1893] Ibid. In Smith's description of a successful use of hypnotic regression for example, it becomes clear that "recognizing the significant connection between traumatic events in her childhood… and both the early and adult traumas and the contemporary triggering events, *made Cindy's symptom picture comprehensible*... She now has a *coherent narrative* of her life, recognizes the links between her past and her present." Smith, *Clinical Hypnosis,* 125. This conception of the hypnotist shows that positive transference and suggestibility can be thus used therapeutically: "Worry about therapists' ability to exploit their patients' heightened suggestibility and to influence them in a manipulative way is ill-founded in a respectful intervention where reassurances and explanations are provided that are perfectly consistent with the patient's conscious wishes and treatment goals." Ibid.

[1894] Spiegel further indicates that "One controlled study of 112 subjects with PTSD demonstrated that psychotherapy with hypnosis was superior to a nontreatment control condition, was equivalent to both psychodynamic therapy and systematic desensitization, and was especially effective in reducing intrusion symptoms"; that "The literature, limited as it is, provides evidence that hypnosis is a promising treatment for traumatic stress-related syndromes." For Spiegel, "the shift in concentration elicited in hypnosis, so useful in defending against the immediate impact of trauma while it is occurring and so problematic in the aftermath of trauma in that it may hamper or delay working through traumatic memories, can be quite useful in mobilizing and putting into perspective traumatic memories and reducing the symptoms of … PTSD." In Spiegel and Spiegel, 443.

[1895] See Chapter 3.

which establishes the "fictional" nature of the experience. In this sense, Nell's remark about the novel can be applied to hypnotic regression and hallucination:

> It is undeniable that we can be moved to bodily feeling and sensation by what we know to be fictionally the case. … The occurrence of feelings and sensations of this sort clearly does not depend on a belief that the situation witnessed or described is actual.[1896]

In the context of hypnotic regression, even if the memory is historically accurate, its meaning is relevant only in that it is recreated and reexperienced in the present. Affective discharge or abreaction are thus the starting point, rather than the end goal, of the therapeutic process.

As Joan Murray-Jobsis specifies about her "renurturing" technique, in hypnotic regression, "both the patient and therapist know that the real-life experiences of the patient were most likely different from the imaginary renurturing. They know that they are creating new experiences in imagery that will not change the past but may help make the present and future better."[1897] In trauma recovery and "corrective" emotional experience alike, the existence of the form-giving narrative framework itself therefore seems more valuable than its content or truth value.

As an immersive, co-created story, hypnotic regression thus offers the "aesthetic illusion" of accessing the past in order to produce a new perspective on one's life and experience. Whether associated or dissociated, it inserts greater distance between the self and the problem, enabling an overview of the situation from the perspective of a cognitively or emotionally more informed viewpoint. As an exercise in make-believe, regression allows one to imagine possible communications between temporal "realities" and creates the setting for skills or insights to be metaphorically transferred between them. Decidedly undecidable with regards to the question of the pathogenesis of childhood trauma in adult psychopathology—mainly due to the vulnerability of memory to distortion and the suggestive nature of the therapeutic-hypnotic relation—hypnotic regression tells the story of an impossibility, a simultaneous, dual position which occurs nowhere

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[1896] Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 285. The suspension of judgment regarding the truth value of traumatic memories does not hinder the healing process. Indeed, "in the absence of external verification, there is no way to know whether [a patient's] memories are authentic or not … 'Seeming' real is not confirmation. The patient's remarkable improvement is also not actually a validation of the memories. It may be that memories that are entirely fictitious could still provide a plausible and satisfying rationale for [the patient's] symptoms and thereby serve as therapeutic leverage for recovery." Smith, *Clinical Hypnosis,* 124. This idea calls into question the cognitive theory according to which our emotional responses are founded on *belief*: "that if I do not take myself to be threatened or in danger, then I am not afraid (for myself); similarly, pitying another involves believing him or her to be in one way or another a victim of misfortune. And beliefs of this sort would appear to depend on a belief in the existence of the objects in question." Nell, Ibid., 279. Provocatively, Neill even argues that "what I feel for or about a fictional character may in fact be more intense than my feelings for or about the starving Ethiopians." Ibid., 285.

[1897] Murray-Jobsis, in *Casebook,* 178.

else but in fiction. Penetrating the past from a present viewpoint, while still providing access to the interiority of the *"*characters," regression does not change or rewrite past events, nor does it remove, or "excise" traumatic memories by inducing post-hypnotic amnesia in a passive subject, unlike what Leys notes about Janet's work. Rather than acting out "hystories" on the one hand and conforming to overused tropes of wishful modification of the past on the other, hypnotic regression thus offers an opportunity for the subject to *create* new ways of looking, by closely "re-reading" the narrative material of their life. Considering therapeutic change as a form of re-reading preserves the responsibility of the subject, while taking into consideration its situation—social, political and material—in the world. Far from promoting a *status quo* or fatalist resignation, it acts as a precondition for change by creating openness to its very possibility. Indeed, before it can occur, transformation requires a worldview in which change is possible.[1898]As Roustang notes, the suggestibility and "passivity" involved are precisely what allows for the "malleability" needed for change to occur: "without suggestibility, all relations remain closed to the emergence of possibility."[1899] Thus, the act of reading one's life—both past and potential future—allows for reconsiderations and reexaminations whose therapeutic value and foundations lie in capacities strongly akin to aesthetic—and thus ethical—perception.

4.1.2.2. Hypnotic Futurization: Fictionally Experiencing Possible Lives

As we have seen, in regression, the reinterpretation of the past is carried out not merely conceptually but with an accompanying emotional and imaginative experience. Insight is obtained through imagination rather than analytic thinking.

However, not only does hypnosis make the past coherent, it also allows one to imaginatively elaborate new futures, the former being necessary for the latter to occur. As Roustang notes:

> When memory transfers its content into the imagination, the latter has the power to produce new combinations. Thus, in another sense, the past is indefinitely transformative, so that our history constantly

[1898] Here the parallel with reading can be pursued, in the movement with which the past constantly returns to itself and makes room for the present: "The literary text relegates our own prevailing views into the past by itself becoming a present experience, for what is now happening or may happen was not possible so long as our characteristic views formed our present." Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 131.

[1899] Roustang, 77. "Cette soumission et la passivité impliquent la malléabilité. Or c'est là un trait positif qui conditionne le changement. Son contraire est la rigidité, qui s'en tient à ce qui est connu, établie, vérifié et qui se refuse à recevoir la nouveauté. Sans la suggestibilité, toute relation est fermée à l'émergence du possible." Roustang, *Qu'est-ce que,* 77.

> renews itself and can even be actively and radically renewed provided we let the power of the imagination act.[1900]

In hypnotherapy, once the patient's attention is no longer fixated on the past, it can be reoriented toward imagining alternative future possibilities. However, as J. M. Coetzee's fictional character Elizabeth Costello notes, "compared with our fiction of the past," our fiction of the future can ordinarily be "a sketchy, bloodless affair, as visions of heaven tend to be."[1901] With the hypnotic imagination, not only does the "bloodless" indeterminacy of the future become concretized into the vividness of the possible experienced as actual, it reconnects the subject with a sense of possibility inherent at the heart of the present situation.

Indeed, hypnosis literalizes the imaginative process already acknowledged in fiction, where imaginative exploration is both the product of a reading of the past, and of the fictional elaboration of possible futures, opening up the present to a renewed sense of possibility:

> Like history, the novel is thus an exercise in making the past coherent. Like history, it explores the respective contributions of character and circumstance to forming the present. By doing so, the novel suggests how we may explore the power of the present to produce the future.[1902]

In hypnotic futurization, a technique also called "age progression," this process is concretized, as potential plotlines and character traits are tried on creatively in the trance state.[1903] As in regression, they are pictured and experienced from within as if they were actual, albeit in a future-oriented manner.[1904] However, unlike what is posited in cognitive solution-oriented therapies, in hypnotherapy, mere conceptual description or evocation of desired futures or possibilities is considered insufficient. As Roustang puts it, "where courage, willpower, and good resolutions

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[1900] Roustang, Ibid., 130. ("Lorsque la mémoire transfère son contenu dans l'imagination, le pouvoir de celle-ci peut produire de nouvelles combinaisons. Donc en un autre sens, le passé est indéfiniment transformable, si bien que notre histoire se renouvelle en permanence et qu'elle peut même être renouvelée activement et radicalement si nous laissons agir le pouvoir de l'imagination").

[1901] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* 38.

[1902] Ibid., 39.

[1903] In the literature, various other expressions are used, such as "time projection, mental rehearsal, process imagery, goal imagery, success imagery and end result imagery." Michael Yapko, *Hypnosis and Treating Depression. Applications in Clinical Practice* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 101. These models are all compatible with Alfred Adler's future-oriented approach, according to which human beings are essentially goal oriented and thus generally see themselves as moving forward toward the "future."

[1904] "This future-oriented approach stands in contrast to more common uses of hypnosis for age regression to past traumatic events, where the client can feel overwhelmed and become destabilized, especially in the early stages of therapy." Yapko, *Depression*, 271. Past oriented models like analysis can be detrimental to some cases according to Yapko: "In Michael's case, the shift from a past orientation of an unchangeable history to a future orientation featuring some of the best experiences life can offer was vital to his recovery from depression." Ibid., 111.

remained helpless, imagining the desired events opened the door to their actualization."[1905] In hypnotic futurization, the induction of a trance state is used to create imaginative immersion in the narrated future, which can feel as vivid as regression. Indeed, "When we consider the research that documents how utterly real and convincing a confabulated (or therapist-suggested, but inaccurate) age regression may feel to a subject, why shouldn't age progressions have the potential to feel just as actual and real?"[1906] Unlike regression, however, the aim is not abreactive but rather that of using fictional experience with the purpose of discovering, redefining, or developing, *via* the imaginative immersion in alternative future storylines, the patient's existing capacities, values, goals, and aspirations.[1907] In this sense, hypnotic futurization can be considered as the mirror image of regression, that is, as an imaginative preparation for human action that offers a creative response to psychological determinism. Rather than understood as mere wishful thinking, it should be reconceptualized, like regression, as an exercise in sympathetic imagination applied to a temporally displaced or relocated self.[1908] In this sense, comparing hypnotic futurization to the novelistic imagination helps underline the contingency and malleability of reality signaled in fictional narratives.

Hypnotic futurization is the concretized elaboration of the process characteristic of ordinary imagination, where vicarious experience and the rehearsal of future scenarios serve as preparation for action. A description by David Novitz gives a detailed account of this process, which he uses to point toward the value of fictional narratives in the practical domain. Adapting an example drawn from Hilary Putnam, Novitz notes the similarities between the "learning" that emerges in reading fiction and imaginatively "visualizing" a course of action:

> Suppose that I want to retrieve a ball which has lodged itself in the upper branches of a walnut tree. I gaze upward trying to fathom which branches will best provide a foothold and which a secure grip. Clearly, if I can imaginatively re-create the situation—that is, if I can "see" myself in my mind's eye moving from this branch to that, holding here and stepping there, and if I can imagine what it feels like to stand on a high, swaying branch while reaching for a ball, I will not only have some idea of, but will have developed what is in effect a complex hypothesis about, what it is like to be in such a situation. To the extent that I assent to this hypothesis, I may be said to have acquired certain empathic beliefs about what it is like to retrieve a ball from the upmost branches of a tree. Not only do these beliefs allow me to construe my predicament in a certain way, but they also allow me to develop plans of action appropriate to it. I will now attend to what I believe are the likely difficulties in the situation, the possible risks, and I will try to conceive of ways of

[1905] Roustang, 131. ("Là où le courage, la volonté, les bonnes résolutions étaient demeurés impuissants, l'imagination des événements souhaités ouvrait la voie de leur réalisation.")
[1906] D. Corydon Hammond, 1990, 515, quoted in Yapko, *Depression,* 101.
[1907] In this way, it helps bridge the gap between the imaginary/fictional/virtual, and the present/real/actual/possible.
[1908] Bernheim even implicitly supports this process, by speaking of the "transfer" of a patient's personality "into another," which implies an imaginative relocation that can be described as the psychological equivalent of the possession examined in Chapter 2. See Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 59.

> avoiding them. … Readers who engage in this imaginative activity acquire what might be termed a set of practical hypotheses: that is to say, they have at their disposal a range of possible ways of responding to, or negotiating, a certain sort of problem.[1909]

Here, visual imagery provides more than a mere conceptual picture or "idea" of what the situation will be like. It creates a "complex hypothesis" which can be used in practice and originates in the exercise of the sympathetic—or as Novitz writes, "empathic"—imagination.

In the field of narrative psychiatry, Bradley Lewis' technique of "imagining future histories," stresses the benefits of this kind of imaginative projection, as opposed to the mere exercise of the rational will or conscious decision making:[1910]

> A future history is a speculative history, a kind of fantasy projection, in which the clinician and client begin the process of imagining possible resolutions to the client's troubles. The work of developing future histories calls on both the clinician's and the client's most creative capacities because a future history involves a leap into the unknown, the possible rather than the actual. … It is important to recognize that developing future histories is imaginative work rather than work of the will. … Only after this imaginative work has been completed can alternative choices be made.[1911]

Nevertheless, hypnotic futurization differs from these methods of conscious visualization or narrative therapy, which are conducted in the waking state. Generally occurring after the formal induction of a modified state of consciousness, it involves an immersive and affective dimension that distinguishes it from surface-level exercises in visualization.[1912]

Elaborated in the 1950s, Erickson's "pseudo-orientation in time" technique was the first of this kind and served as the original basis for ulterior models of hypnotic futurization. In Erickson's method, after the induction, the patient is made to "travel forward into the future to a time and space" in which the resolution of the current problem has already been achieved. The patient is then instructed to "accept the future time as the present," while the therapist inquires what they have learned and done in the interim that helped solve the problem.[1913] The patient thus imaginatively inhabits a desired future situation, before "returning" to the present in order to

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[1909] Novitz, 349-350. See Hilary Putnam, "Literature, Science and Reflection," in *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 83-94.

[1910] "Clinicians who add a consideration of future history to their previous consideration of present history and past history more easily recognize the storied dimension of clinical work." This involves reading works of fiction, which is the "first step of imagining new possibilities." Also, in narrative psychiatry, "it is… important to recognize that the new possibilities of narrative work are not developed out of nothing. They are developed in the crucible of cultural frames that are available to the client and the therapist." Lewis, 85; 81.

[1911] Lewis, 81.

[1912] As a form of concrete imagining, hypnosis shows that mere ideas are insufficient to create change. Instead, it adds affect, physical sensation, hallucinated sounds or images to make the experience lifelike rather than merely conceptual and abstract.

[1913] Erickson, 1954, in *The Collected Papers,* vol. 1., 261. Although this is not systematic, Erickson tended to induce amnesia and use the obtained information as a therapeutic strategy.

provide necessary insight or useful "skills" to their "present" self, which during the experience is perceived as "past" and thus less informed. More recently, Michael Yapko describes using a similar technique with patients suffering from clinical depression:[1914]

> A discussion is held with the patient about developing a desired future image in which the patient would be comfortable, better, healthier, happier, or somehow greatly improved. Once this desired state is identified, the patient is guided into hypnosis, and then age progression is facilitated by suggestions for 'time travel' into a specific time in the future. The future reality is hypnotically enhanced by suggestions focused on visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory senses that add both experiential power and realism to the experience. In addition, the patient's ongoing experiences are enhanced by ego strengthening … Patients are told that these positive images, sensations, and feelings are a special gift that they can take with them on their trip 'back from the future' into the present. … The patient is asked to bring the written assignment to the following session and to read it aloud. The symptoms of futurelessness, helplessness, and hopelessness are usually significantly reduced, replaced by a sense of new hope, strength, inner resourcefulness, self-mastery, and belief in the possibility of making a recovery.[1915]

Clearly, the objective here is neither to make predictions about the future nor to "wish" the problematic situation or symptom away. Rather, the aim is to inject a sense of possibility into the present state of the subject, whose ability to carry out therapeutic work becomes strengthened. Like metaphors, which "invite us to look at things in a new way without first imparting factual beliefs about those things," visualization and imaginative inhabiting of future possibilities in the context of hypnotherapy allows the patient to re-evaluate their present state.[1916]

As was the case with hypnotic regression, conceiving futurization as mere erasure of the problem is thus highly reductive. For example, in patients suffering from PTSD, instead of being used to imagine a future in which the traumatic memory is "forgotten," futurization opens up the possibility of a life in which the condition has been worked through:

> Age progression can be achieved in most patients by giving suggestions for walking along a road to recovery to a time in which the memory has been processed and is no longer distressing. We instruct patients to notice all of the small changes in thoughts, feelings, and actions that occur along the road, and to specify how they were able to achieve these changes.[1917]

By directly mobilizing the creative capacities of the subject to imagine possible alternatives or developments, hypnosis sheds light on the potentiality, freedom, and contingency at the heart of

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[1914] Which he calls "Back from the Future." Yapko, *Depression,* 102.

[1915] Ibid., 102. Yapko specifies: "When the patient comes out of hypnosis, a brief discussion is conducted about the patient's experience. This is followed by a homework assignment in which the patient is asked to write about the experience and describe what it was like to take such a 'voyage' into the future. This written assignment may be requested while the patient is still in hypnosis." Ibid.

[1916] Novitz, "Fiction and the Growth of Knowledge," 353**.** Yi-Ping Ong's analysis of Kierkegaard's notion of imagination shows that the latter is intimately bound up with the ability of the self to represent its possibilities, hopes, and fears. In this sense, a self that is devoid of imagination has "lost the capacity to be a self." Kierkegaard's notion of "infinitizing reflection" involves "the representation of the self to itself according to which it is able to go beyond what it merely *is* ... and project itself into the real, of what it might be or not be." Ong, 119.

[1917] in Lynn et al, *Essentials of Clinical Hypnosis,* 169.

human reality. Like the existential novel, it inquires "what it means to understand one's own life as a work in progress" and points toward the freedom at the heart of existence, even if temporarily.[1918] Furthermore, in hypnotic age progression, the patient must let their imagined self become "autonomous" and take on a life of its own, as would a character in a novel. Just as the novelistic character must appear as free for the novel to succeed, hypnotic futurization must produce a similar "aesthetic effect of lived freedom."[1919] In age progression, even after the "future goal" is fictionally established, the subject must operate within a mode where the narrative is not yet written, is not predetermined, and can be acted upon as it remains unknown, yet to be created.[1920] By allowing the future self to "emerge," the subject resembles the reader who lets the story unfold, rather than the author or omniscient narrator who accesses the minds of those in the past.[1921] Both hypnotic imagination and novel reading thus depend on the *limitation* of the subject's perspective, from which the future remains pregnant with possibility.[1922]

Emphasizing the contingency of events, futurization also offers a creative response, an alternative to deterministic, past-oriented therapeutic models.[1923] It reinjects a sense of the virtual, the possible, of contingency, into reality. As Arthur Frank writes, the function of stories is partly to signal this "fragility of events," to "arouse people's imaginations concerning how their lives might have been different, and the possibilities that still lie open to them."[1924] Hypnotic narratives tap into a similar sense of contingency and fragility and use it as a significant therapeutic strategy.

In his analysis of this strategy, Roustang has shown that the condition of therapeutic change based on hypnotic-imaginative immersion is *unknowing,* for both subject and operator. Indeed, letting go of preexisting—evaluative or fatalistic—frameworks is necessary for a re-setting and an

[1918] Ong, 195. See Sartre: "man is not the sum of what he has, but the totality of what he does not yet have, of what he might have." Sartre, conclusion of his easy 1939 on Faulkner, in Ong, 71.
[1919] Ibid., 67.
[1920] As Sartre notes in his description of novel reading: "if I suspect that the hero's future actions are determined… my own time ebbs back into me; there remains only myself… confronted by a static book" and later the character is "inside me; he is alive" (Sartre, "Francois Mauriac and Freedom," in Ong, 66.
[1921] In realism, this perspective from which the future seems unwritten is necessary for the novelistic illusion to operate.
[1922] For the success of both therapeutic change and the aesthetic illusion of the novel, reader and subject alike "must be convinced of the illusion of an open future in the novel in a way that recalls the indeterminacy possibility, and freedom of her own existence," even if its "truth" can never be verified. Ong, 67.
[1923] For example, see Appendix A, for Roy Schafer's critique of the two "deterministic" Freudian stories of the "beast" and the "machine." For Schafer, these narrative structures are designed to "totalize" and incorporate any inconsistencies in the analysand's experience that might seem not to fit into the analytic model: "Those actions that appear to be free and responsible must be worked into the deterministic narrative of the beast, the machine, or the incoherent mingling of the two. Freedom is a myth of conscious thought." Roy Schafer, "Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue," *Critical Inquiry* 7, 1 (1980): 33.
[1924] Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe.*, 49-50.

opening up to these virtual possibilities for the subject's future life. In this context, writes Roustang, the imagination is the central faculty, as it becomes the "context of all possible particular contexts," the locus where all virtual possibilities gather, and out of which they can be deployed or explored.[1925] Like Proustian involuntary memory and hypnotic regression, the process requires a letting go, out of which future possibilities spontaneously emerge before one can rationally or consciously choose to implement them in actuality. This necessitates a temporary forgetting or suspension of the known, in order to re-learn, by reimagining alternative modes of doing and being: "the skills we have previously learned must be forgotten, so that we can imagine better alternatives."[1926] This unlearning is itself the outcome of a learning process, which hypnotic induction both symbolizes and teaches. As Roustang notes: "giving consistency to this non-action, this non-intentionality, depends on a form of work, patience, learning, on a strategy or trick, in short, on a technique."[1927] In other words, both in hypnotic regression and progression, trance constitutes a letting go and an opening up, which allows for the emergence of alternative futures in the imagination, by make-believing them to be experienced in actuality.

Through this hypnotic unlearning, preparation for change in the actual world can take place. As Roustang notes, therapeutic success is impossible without these imaginative acts of make-believe:

> The subject suggests to himself something that does not exist yet, or that exists only in the imagination, which is *the only faculty* that can project itself into the future. Without this projection which prefigures change, the latter would never come into being.[1928]

The therapeutic value of futurization simultaneously emerges from, and brings to the foreground, the actual effects of storytelling, and the role of vicarious or rehearsed experience in the constitution of actuality.[1929] As Ricoeur puts it, "the power of allowing oneself to be struck by new possibilities precedes the power of making up one's mind and choosing."[1930] Similarly, Fromm supports the therapeutic value of "reality testing in fantasy," which leads to the development of "coping mechanisms previously not available" to the subject.[1931] In experiencing the intensity of

[1925] Roustang, 129.
[1926] Ibid., 179.
[1927] Ibid., 178.
[1928] Ibid., 129.
[1929] Social evolutionary explanations of fictional narration often insist on the fact that rehearsing future possible scenarios is the primary evolutionary function of storytelling in general.
[1930] Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 101.
[1931] Fromm, 1986, 221.

hypnotic imagery, the patient "gains mastery" over a given situation, which "enables him then to approach the realistic situation … with much more confidence," as he "transfers the sense of success from the imagined to the real situation."[1932] As we will see in the next sections, this is a process shared by both the novelistic and hypnotic imagination. Just as for Novitz, readers "can only acquire cognitive skills from fiction by tentatively projecting the factual beliefs gleaned from the work on to the world about them," in hypnosis, fictional rehearsal paves the way for effective action, which "once adopted and entrenched, can correctly be described as acquired skills."[1933]

Our analysis of hypnotic futurization and regression shows that the "projective" power of the hypnotic imagination is not merely evocative but also transformative. As does literature, hypnotic imagination "helps human beings to reveal the world, or to come to understand it in light of possibilities."[1934] It also "shape[s] the reality before us by regarding it and changing it in new ways, integrating possibilities with what is given."[1935] Irreducible to escapist fantasy, literary and hypnotic imagination thus share the power to "defy actuality" and reveal "properties that cannot be immediately observed" in ordinary life.[1936] Crucially, this is also an embodied process, which explains the frequent use of ideomotor phenomena in the hypnotic experience: "We can imagine change, because we have made it happen with our bodies, and we can intentionally effect change in the world because we can imagine things otherwise than they are."[1937]

In this context, Gosetti's description of "art as an authentic choice" can just as well be applied to hypnosis, which "must not lead to the denial of reality or an escape from it," but is "an expression of its ecstatic latencies."[1938] The ethical potential of immersive imagining then appears more clearly. As an aesthetic mode of relating to reality, hypnosis, like art, contributes:

> not only to freedom but to the ethical responsibility freedom entails. ... Imagination allows us to consider different potential modes of response, rather than merely to react immediately, unreflectively, to pressures of a given situation. In so doing, imagination may provide us the liberty to shape our interactions, to change

[1932] Ibid., 221.
[1933] Novitz, 353.
[1934] Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Life of Imagination: Revealing and Making the World* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 2.
[1935] Ibid., 2. By imagining, we are not simply recombining, we can also "project ourselves into another situation to see, or think about, the world from another perspective." Ibid., 4.
[1936] Ibid., 147.
[1937] Gosetti-Ferencei, 166-7. Our analysis of hypnotic futurization and regression shows that "narratives" mobilize the *whole* being: we do not read with just our intellect. Transposed into the domain of literary theory, this means that either we must accept the affective, bodily, and imaginative components of reading, or we must include these "nonrational" responses into the realm of the cognitive.
[1938] Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Ecstatic Quotidian,* 24. In this sense, it also fits into "a wider cognitive ecology, enabled in its deviations from habitual thinking by cognitive play." Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Life of the Imagination,* 23.

> ourselves or the surrounding world—not with some wave of a magic wand but in and through the circumstances at hand.[1939]

Not only does this aesthetic-ethical dimension constitute the foundation of the therapeutic value of hypnotic imagination, it remains entirely covered up in non-narrative conceptions of hypnotic regression and futurization, which are inherently *narrative*—diegetic, rather than mimetic or cathartic—activities.

Like the Sartrean imagination,[1940] the hypnotic imagination is thus "two-sided," it is "turned toward reality insofar as it turns away from it."[1941] Indeed, if it were unable to "flee" from reality, imagination would remain "fatally glued to it" and stripped of its power to reconfigure our relation to it.[1942] Because it cultivates and enables attention to *all* possibilities, imagination can be considered as the most "realistic" of faculties. As Roustang argues:

> It is even the only one to be realistic, since it offers an infinitely richer universe than that presented when I observe this arm, this hand… It is what resists preformed reality, and this explain why it is able to transform it.[1943]

Indeed, for him, only the imagination is able to "contain, without imposing constraints on it, the limitless variety of things and beings, and their correspondence, making it possible for them to constitute a world."[1944] This imaginative world-formation at the heart of hypnotic narration reveals the double impact of narrative in our lives. While regression points to its inevitable dimension (access to the past is always mediated by narration), futurization reveals its transformative potential (fictional narration prepares for the actual). In both cases, creating new ways of *looking* at the world is what leads to new ways of being in the world. This transformative potential is overlooked in archaeological and non-narrative conceptions of hypnotherapy. On the contrary, as I have suggested, hypnotic narrativity is interpretive in nature. This brings the practice closer to

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[1939] Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Life of the Imagination* 79.

[1940] "à double face…tournée vers le réel en tant que détournée de lui" (Roustang, 129). See for example: "For consciousness to be able to imagine, it must be able to escape from the world by its very nature, it must be able to stand back from the world by its own efforts. In a word, it must be free." Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of Imagination,* trans. J. Webber (1940; New York: Routledge, 2004), 183.

[1941] Roustang, 129.

[1942] Ibid. ("Si l'imagination n'était pas capable de fuir la réalité, elle y serait fatalement engluée; elle n'aurait donc aucun pouvoir pour configurer notre monde comme une totalité, et bien encore moins pour configure notre rapport à ce monde").

[1943] Roustang, 129-130. ("L'imagination est réaliste, elle est même la seule à être réaliste, puisqu'elle propose un univers infiniment plus riche que celui présenté par l'attention à ce bras, cette main… Elle est ce qui résiste à la réalité préformée et c'est pour cela qu'elle est capable de la transformer").

[1944] Roustang, 135. ("Seule l'imagination …est capable de supporter, sans vouloir la contraindre, la variété sans limites des choses et des êtres, et leur correspondance, de rendre possible qu'ils constituent un monde")

forms of reading than impositions of "rewriting" one's life on the one hand, or "reenacting" it on the other.

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In the second part of this chapter, I will transpose the question of narrative "efficacy" from the psychological to the ethical level, bringing therapeutics and ethics together in the common aspiration toward the good life, where sympathy for the self and for others can coexist without contradiction. Emphasizing the intersection between therapeutic and ethical change, I will stress that psychotherapy centers around questions of "how one ought to lead his or her life," or of "what values should permeate my relationships with others."[1945] Indeed, "when people begin psychotherapy they enter a critical moment of choice and self-determination, during which, even if implicitly, "politics and ethics are at the heart of their decision making."[1946] Just as narrative oriented therapies describe moral norms and principles as collective acts of storytelling,[1947] moral philosophers show that our stories are ethical positionings, regardless of their explicit content. Furthermore, as my analysis of the hypnotic imagination shows, both in ethical and therapeutic change consciousness must recognize possible tensions or disjunctions "between its own mode of reflection and a reality that lies beyond or outside it (or between its own … vocabulary and a reality that cannot be entirely grasped by that vocabulary)."[1948] As I will show, the production of new modes of *seeing as,* whether literary or therapeutic, is inherently an ethical activity. This contention, often found in contemporary moral philosophy, emphasizes the evaluative dimension

[1945] George Howard, *A Tale of Two Stories: Excursions into a Narrative Approach to Psychology.* Notre Dame, IN: Academic Publications, 1989, 77. Howard pursues, in defense of the humanities: "for glimmering of answers to such questions, one would be ill-advised to query science," since "knowledge is insufficient to give purpose to one's life. Purpose and meaning exit when one sees himself or herself as an actor in some larger story—be it a cultural tale, a religious narrative, a family saga, a political movement, and so forth." Ibid, 77. Similarly, as narrative therapists have often pointed out, "when people author their own stories, they clearly express their own moral perspective" and "assume responsibility for their own moral actions." Parry and Doan, *Story Re-visions*, 46.

[1946] Lewis, 53. In this sense, the narratives we choose to adopt in the therapeutic context have inescapable ethical consequences: "the question to ask is not simply, which story is true? But, instead, what are the consequences of each story? And what kind of life will follow from inhabiting these stories?" Lewis, 14.

[1947] See for example Michael White: "there is a dominant story about what it means to be a person of moral worth in our culture. This is a story that emphasizes self-possession, self-containment, self-actualization, and so on… This individuality is a way of being that is actually a culturally preferred way of being, and what is 'right' is culturally specific. What is right requires certain operations on our lives, much of which are gender and class-specific" M. White, *Re-authoring Lives: Interviews and Essays* (Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Center Publications, 1995), 16.

[1948] Antonaccio, "Moral Change and the Magnetism of the Good." *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 20 (2000): 151.

of all description, where "aesthetic perception, seeing-as, and other forms of 'concrete' imagining manifest the productive ways in which… the world is not merely neutrally grasped as data but saturated with thought and value."[1949] Fictional narratives, whether hypnotic, therapeutic, or novelistic, are ethical activities that express value-laden worldviews. The ethical value of these narratives lies, not in the transmission of pedagogical or normative content, but in their shared ability to creatively re-*direct* the recipient's attention.

4.2. The Ethics of Immersive Restorying

As Iris Murdoch writes, one way of achieving moral transformation is first "to imagine how things might be different."[1950] Now that we have established narrativity at the heart of hypnotherapeutic change, in this section, we will compare hypnosis and novels by conceiving them as means to create narrative "unselfing" and "restorying" for the recipient. To do so, I will underline the ethical possibilities that open up, for both hypnosis and literary criticism, once the focus is placed on the specifically *immersive* quality of hypnotic and novelistic storytelling.

The entire edifice of hypnosis is constructed on the determining role of the inner life and the narratives which compose it. Hypnosis can be considered as a form of "unselfing" in that it acknowledges the determining effects of both the direction and objects of the attention, manipulating them in order to bring about transformation in the subject. In the therapeutic context, this consists either in modifying existing limiting beliefs and autosuggestions or immersively imagining alternative scenarios and plotlines to be explored: in creating a process of immersive "restorying" for the subject. Both processes involve reorienting awareness away from its habitual neurotic contents and patterns of thought, toward more complex forms of narration, using the power of the imagination rather than conceptual analysis. The restorying involved in therapeutic change is that which, by cultivating perception, emotion, and attention to particulars, modifies preexisting, limited and limiting internal representations. Unlike the various forms of "reframing" and "reauthoring" used in other narrative or cognitive therapies, its immersive dimension is what

[1949] Gosetti-Ferencei, *The Life of the Imagination,* 116.
[1950] Murdoch, *Metaphysics,* 330-331. In Murdoch's view, moral change implies opening up to a reality that lies outside our limited perspective, which is also the process involved in hypnotic reimagining, as I have underlined in this section. Similarly, Omer and Alon note that "the best moments in therapy are those in which we and our clients discover the limitations and biases of our own provisional descriptions." Omer and Alon, *Constructing,* 183.

maintains its kinship with literary absorption, and is similar to the way in which a novel differs from a philosophical treatise.

For the subject, hypnotic restorying involves forms of becoming-absorbed in something else, something new—a story in which the self, its problem or symptoms, no longer constitute the center. The insistence on the importance of immersion shows that it is *fictionality* which is at the heart of the transformative power of both hypnosis and novels, mobilizing similar faculties in the subject. As Kendall Walton notes:

> It is chiefly by fictionally facing certain situations… and having or expressing certain feelings, that a dreamer, fantasizer, or game player comes to terms with his actual feelings—that he discovers them, learns to accept them, purges himself of them, or whatever exactly it is that he does. If I am right about this, people can be expected to derive similar benefits from novels, plays, and films only if it is fictional that *they themselves exist and participate… in the events* portrayed in the works.[1951]

Thus, participation and engagement, both *in* and *with* the fictional world—the immersion and interactivity which Ryan mentions—are necessary for obtaining transformation by imaginative world-making.

In this section, I will examine the form of attentiveness that is involved in this hypnotic-literary restorying.[1952] I will argue that both in hypnosis and the novel, the attentiveness cultivated by narrative exploration allows the reader-subject to inwardly open up to the reality of other lives, which in turn modifies one's ability to relate and attend to the external world of observable action. In this sense, this immersive "restorying" is a form of becoming-other.[1953] Iris Murdoch's concept of moral attention will be especially useful here, as it helps situate the node of the ethical life in the subject's way of looking at the world and "inner life," just as hypnotherapy situates the emergence of therapeutic change in worldview rather than behavior. My reading of Murdoch's concept reveals the importance of the middle ground, formed by internal representations, between unconscious mental processes on the one hand and exterior actions on the other. Indeed, for Murdoch as for the hypnotherapist, "freedom is not strictly the exercise of the will, but rather the

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[1951] Kendall Walton, "Fearing fictions," in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature,* 274. In fact, Walton extends this potential to the acts of make-believe in the therapeutic context, such as role-playing used in Gestalt therapy: "I find encouragement for these speculations in the deliberate use of roleplaying in educational simulation games, and as a therapeutic technique in certain kinds of psychotherapy." Ibid.

[1952] Here I use ethical criticism and theory not to impose a conservative or moralizing framework onto literary texts but to underline the centrality of narration, vision, and attention in the constitution of experience, as well as its determining role in all forms of self-transformation, whether ethical or therapeutic.

[1953] Against purely rationalist and cognitivist models, as well as deontological or normative ethics and purely linguistic approaches, this cross-comparison between hypnotherapy and ethical criticism will help underline the determining role of the inner-life, of psychological and affective components in constituting the events of our outer, ordinary and ethical, lives.

experience of accurate vision," because "by the time the moment of choice has arrived the quality of attention has probably determined the nature of the act."[1954] In this framework, ethical criticism can then join hypnotherapy in developing a conception of the good life which takes into consideration the relations between different parts of the self—conscious and unconscious, intentional and automatic, affective and intellectual—which intervene in observable behavior, the latter merely constituting the surface of the individual's moral life. In the ethical life, as in therapeutic change, the source of transformation lies not in behavior but upstream, in the quality of the subject's awareness, in the direction and objects of the attention.[1955] This view allows us to construct an ethics which takes into consideration the teachings of psychoanalysis, without condemning individual freedom altogether. In my reading, Murdoch's mobilization of the Freudian unconscious does not entail that psychical determinism is ineluctable, but rather, points toward the potential transformations that become available once the constraints imposed on us by our past have been acknowledged, as does hypnotherapy. Like hypnotherapy, Murdoch's moral psychology is not based on general abstract rules, maxims, or imperatives, but balances the determining constraints of the unconscious with the central role of a "loving gaze" that is irreducible to libidinal drives and allows for self-transformation.[1956] From there, a range of transformative possibilities are opened up at the heart of human attention, while avoiding the pitfalls of wishful thinking on the one hand and fatalism on the other.[1957]

As we shall see, reemphasizing the importance of the concept of attention in Murdoch's thought shows aspects of her moral philosophy that distinguish it from the Christian morality or the Neo-Platonic defense of the Good that have been highlighted in her work.[1958] What I would like to call attention to in her work is moral psychology that takes into account the particularity of reality, underlines the inevitable delusion of our internal narratives, and the possibility of their

[1954] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," in Conradi, ed. *Existentialists and Mystics*, 355.
[1955] For Murdoch, the right attention to, or perception of, reality has a greater chance of leading to "appropriate action." Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," 73.
[1956] See for instance: "We need a moral philosophy which can speak significantly of Freud and Marx… We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now, can once again be made central." Murdoch 1969, in *Existentialists and Mystics*, 339.
[1957] Murdoch's conception of moral transformation thus helps revise a conception of hypnosis as mere positive or magical thinking. On the contrary, "therapy begins… with *giving up* magical thinking, with the relinquishment of this longing for cure or the waving of a magic wand." Kurtz, *The Good Story*, 61.
[1958] See for instance Maria Antonaccio. "Imagining the Good: Iris Murdoch's Godless Theology" in *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethic*s, 1996, Vol. 16 (1996), 223-242 ; Elizabeth Burns, "Iris Murdoch and the Nature of Good" in *Religious Studies*, Sep., 1997, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Sep., 1997): 303-313; see also Silvia Panizza, "A Secular mysticism?" in *Filosofía, arte y mística,* Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2017.

modification through aesthetic processes. Furthermore, despite what her use of expressions such as "loving gaze" might seem to imply, Murdoch offers a distinctly non-Romantic, non-sentimental argument about the potential "unselfing" enabled by the modification of moral perception and the redirecting of attention. Despite her critique of existentialist philosophy, her work on the ethical value of literature suggests that self-transformation is possible through the cultivation of an increase in awareness, which occurs at the level of the individual's worldview, and suggests that being emerges from seeing. My emphasis on these particular aspects of Murdoch's thought will underline the forms of awareness and attending shared by novelistic and hypnotic narratives, which enhance the possibilities for change in everyday life. Insofar as it represents, in concrete form, the ethical differences between an interiority composed of limited, self-serving, or anxious fantasies, and one constructed on more complex forms of imagining and understanding of particular situations or persons, the novel's ethical force resembles hypnotic "unselfing"—the decentering and reorientation of the attention, the restorying *via* immersion, which we argued is at the heart of hypnotic phenomena.

In delineating this ethics of immersive or absorptive restorying, I hope to clearly distinguish it, as I did with hypnotic regression, from the mere delusional "erasure" or "rewriting" of the events of one's past. In doing so, I propose a response to ethical doubts raised about the consequences of defending the freedom to reauthor one's life, such as those raised by J. M. Coetzee in *The Good Story*:

> I find the *nostrum* that each of us has a life-story, and we should exert ourselves to become the author of that life-story, rather than allowing others to tell it to or for us, to be morally dubious… I am alarmed by the prospect of a world in which people's notion of liberty includes the liberty to reconstruct their personal histories endlessly without fear of sanction (fear of the reality principle).[1959]

On the contrary, like the psychoanalyst Arabella Kurtz contends about narrative truth in psychoanalysis in her exchange with J. M. Coetzee in *The Good Story*, by using authors such as Murdoch, I hope to show that the value of hypnosis and reading novels lies is their contribution toward "working through mask-narratives to find a truer one."[1960] Their common transformative value is based on fiction's ability to "delude" us into adopting stories that dispel, rather than solidify, self-delusion. There are two ways in which the novel cultivates ethical forms of attending, which I will explore in turn. The first is in engaging our emotional responsiveness, which is an

[1959] Coetzee, *The Good Story*, 41.
[1960] Kurtz, *The Good Story*, 5.

inevitably ethical process. The second is cultivating our moral perception or attention, as Murdoch contends. Both of these are not only at the heart of moral transformation, they are also central capacities of the "hypnotic" subject.

4.2.1. The Ethical Value of Emotions

At the end of the twentieth century, Anglo-American moral philosophy saw a broad revival of the view that emotions are a central part of morality, reestablishing them as a "constitutive part of how we see the world, how it appears to us, and thus as an indispensable part of our *cognitive* makeup."[1961] In this context, philosophers like Martha Nussbaum strive to reintegrate affect as a potential guide and cognitive aid both in novel reading and moral deliberation.[1962] As Nussbaum writes in *Love's Knowledge*, the very act of deciphering novelistic prose, *de facto,* mobilizes our moral attentiveness, which comprises emotional responses that are absent from the reading of purely theoretical, philosophical reasoning: "To work through these sentences… is to become involved in an activity of exploration and unravelling that uses abilities, especially abilities of emotion and imagination, rarely tapped by philosophical texts."[1963]

For many critics, this implies that "readers who are incapable of certain affective responses will not receive cognitive benefits from certain works" and will miss out on the complete ethical understanding of both the fictional text and its inhabitants.[1964] Such approaches to reading, which highlight both the cognitive and ethical value of emotions, entail re-committing, to a certain degree, the "affective fallacy" theorized by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley in the 1950s.[1965] However, as Jane Thrailkill argues, "attentiveness to the *experience* of a literary work need not eradicate meaning (or its concomitant, civilized society) if we come to accept that feeling is not

[1961] Hämäläinen, 34, emphasis added. Against modern moral philosophy's focus on the Kantian rational will and disregard for the moral role of inclinations, virtue ethics defended the individual's moral responses as "a central part of his moral make-up," which, if lacking, can become "a central moral fault." Ibid.
[1962] For Nussbaum, the novel "calls upon and also develops our ability to confront mystery with the cognitive engagement of *both thought and feeling.*" Nussbaum *Love's Knowledge*, 143, emphasis added. For Iris Murdoch also, experiences involving moral change "involve not only thought but affect… In recognizing the values and disvalues of things, one becomes subject, however inchoately to the motivational force that these properties exert." Alison Denham, Envisioning the Good: Iris Murdoch's Moral Psychology." *Modern Fiction Studies* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 620.
[1963] Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 143.
[1964] James O. Young, "Literature, Representation and Knowledge," in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature* (Peterborough, ONT: Broadview Press, 2008),373.
[1965] See W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy" in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).

opposed to interpretation but *part of it*."[1966] Transposed to the ethics of novel reading, this implies that "a reader of *Anna Karenina* who fails to be moved by Anna's fate might be thought to have missed something as crucial to the appreciation of the work."[1967] In this view, "if the reader truly understands what Anna Karenina thinks, it is in part because he has been brought to appreciate how she feels. The two achievements are not independent of each other."[1968] As underlined in the experience of hypnosis, to appreciate how a character feels requires eliciting the appropriate feeling-response in the subject. In this chapter, I will work with the assumption that an emotional responsiveness and engagement of this sort is necessary to properly understand a fictional work, a requirement shared by novelistic and hypnotic narratives alike.[1969] Emotional responses are the opposite of the exterior, distant, bystander view which prevents full participation in the fictional universe or game of make-believe. Because they "create expectations" and "direct the player's attention to some of the game's most important features" they are necessary to its proper comprehension.[1970] Failure to engage emotionally and imaginatively with the work demonstrates "failure to understand the game of make-believe altogether."[1971]

As we saw in Chapter 3, the cognitive function of emotions as providing guidance in our actual, ethical lives, does not imply that they must be founded on *beliefs* about the existence of the objects to which they apply in actuality.[1972] Hypnotherapy and literature alike provide examples of the presence and power of affect which do not require belief in the existence of the objects that trigger it.[1973] Indeed, in both cases, the recipient can experience genuine affective reactions—such as fear, sadness, even sexual arousal—without being "deceived" and naively assuming that the work's propositional content is a direct description of the actual world.[1974] In this sense, Kendall

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[1966] Thrailkill, *Affecting Fictions. Mind, Body and Emotion in American Literary Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4, emphasis added.
[1967] Davies and Mathesen, *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature* (Peterborough, ONT: Broadview Press, 2008), 253.
[1968] Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 344.
[1969] This is because emotional engagement is necessary to "notice and appraise vital aspects" of the fictional work. Novitz, "The Beholder's Share," 80. Indeed, in any game of make-believe, some features are only noticed because of "expectations bred from emotional involvement" in the game. Novitz, "The Beholder's Share," 81.
[1970] Novitz "The Beholder's Share," 77.
[1971] Ibid., 81.
[1972] The strongest cognitivist positions would hold that "the belief is both necessary and sufficient for the emotion," such that "the emotion is itself identical with the full acceptance of, or recognition of, a belief," as does Aristotle. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge,* 292.
[1973] In Chapter 3, we examined the question of the "reality" of emotions whose object are fictional. What emerged from our inquiry, which is informed by the experience of hypnotic hallucination, is that one need not hold a belief about the existence of an object in order to experience genuine emotional reaction and responses to it.
[1974] Novitz, "The Beholder's Share," 84.

Walton's "quasi-emotions" should be thought of as having the same impact on the beholder as "real" ones. Charles knows that the fictional slime does not exist, yet feels the physiological manifestations of fear, even though he takes no empirical action such as running or calling the police. Even if, like Walton, "we reject the idea that our affective responses to fictions are genuine emotions," these responses have the same experiential impact, "the same affective qualities" as genuine emotions.[1975]

Fictionality is therefore not an obstacle to the emotional responsiveness which is a central component of the cultivation of our moral capacities.[1976] On the contrary, in literature, the necessity, and ethical relevance of affective responsiveness can be brought to the forefront on two levels: in the moral-affective lives of the diegetic characters and in our moral-affective responses to them.

As Alison Denham indicates, one central "ancestor" of the conception which defends the moral value of literature based on its affective power is Tolstoy, who in *What is Art?* develops a non-cognitivist conception of art, famously centered on morality.[1977] In Tolstoy's essay, art is famously defined as "that human activity which consists in one man's consciously conveying to others, by certain external signs, the feelings he has experienced, and in others being infected by those feelings and also experiencing them."[1978] Furthermore, the subject-matter of art should be to replace "lower feelings, less kind and less needed for the good of humanity, by kinder feelings, more needed for that good."[1979] As Denham points out, the main interest of Tolstoy's essay is less its morally prescriptive conclusion than his "implicit premise concerning the character of ethical

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[1975] Davies and Mathesen, 256. In other words, although we cannot be afraid "of" what we know to be fictional characters, as Victor Nell puts it, we can be afraid "for and with" them, experiencing genuine affective reactions. Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 284. Significantly for our purposes further on, "both fear for and fear with others, unlike fear for oneself, are sorts of response that we often experience as a result of imaginatively adopting another's perspective on things" Ibid.

[1976] This conception provides an antidote to the accusations of simulation that often accompany the mimetic dimension of the hypnotic experience and conceive of the subject as "merely acting." See Leys, *Trauma*, 13.

[1977] Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience,* 19.

[1978] Tolstoy, *What is Art?* 1897. Trans. R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (London: Penguin Book, 1995), 90. This "non-rational, immediate infection of feeling" occurs "not by representing or describing the emotions," but by way of "unmediated transmission." Denham, 18. The parallel with hypnotic contagion is further suggested in the idea that artistic absorption annihilates the boundary between self and other, both in the artist-beholder relation and among the public receiving the work: "The effect of the true work of art is to abolish in the consciousness of the perceiver the distinction between himself and the artist, and not only between himself and the artist, but also between himself and all who perceive the same work of art." Tolstoy, 210. Similarly: "Every work of art results in the one who receives it entering into a certain kind of communion with the one who produced or is producing the art, and with all those who, simultaneously with him, before him, or after him, have received or will receive the same artistic impression" Ibid, 87.

[1979] Tolstoy, *What is Art?* 214.

perceptions."[1980] Indeed, in Tolstoy's account, "any activities which strongly influence our sentiments (for instance, artistic…) must be recognized as having significance for ethical perception as well."[1981] In this sense, "the representation of values is not a wholly cognitive matter… one's grasp of them at least sometimes occurs by way of affect and emotion."[1982] Tolstoy's "sentimentalist epistemology of value" thus reveals how ethical beliefs are constituted in part by affective experience, and emotions act as "a principal—and wholly respectable—source of moral insight."[1983]

From here, one might be tempted to deduce that at the heart of the ethical value of literature, as in our ethical lives, emotions not only precede rational deliberation but overshadow rational choices altogether.

In the context of contemporary ethical literary criticism, such views of the primacy of affect over rational deliberation are often found in the reading of J.M. Coetzee's novels, which we will examine more in detail further on. In "A Yes without a No," for example, Derek Attridge claims that Coetzee's texts are founded on a clearly "non-rational" ethical stance, in which "the precedence of the ethical demand as an *experience* over any rational calculation is clear."[1984] As evidence for his claim, Attridge cites and a passage from a roundtable published in *The Death of the Animal*, where Coetzee affirmed:

> There are people (among whom I number myself) who believe that our ethical impulses are prerational (I would be tempted to go along with Wordsworth and say that …our moral being is more deeply founded within us than rationality itself), and that all that a rational ethics can achieve is to articulate and give form to ethical impulses.[1985]

In other words, any philosophical justification for ethical responses is seen as "merely *post hoc*, a product of our shared veneration of rationality."[1986] For Attridge it is not reason but affect which leads to moral change, both in fictional characters and readers: novels "give us not information, moral exempla, or philosophical truths, but *experiences*, and experiences which, by taking us into

[1980] Denham, *Metaphor,* 22.
[1981] Ibid., 21.
[1982] Ibid., 22.
[1983] Ibid., 23. To Denham's reading, we would add that Tolstoy allows for the inclusion of hypnosis, via its infectious foundation, into the domain of the artistic.
[1984] Attridge, "'A Yes without a No'. Philosophical Reason and the Ethics of Conversion in Coetzee's Fiction." In P. Hayes and J. Wilm (eds.), *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 94. See also Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature,* London: Routledge, 2004 and *The Work of Literature,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
[1985] Coetzee, in P. Cavalieri, *The Death of the Animal A Dialogue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 121.
[1986] Attridge, 92.

new territory of meaning and feeling, are capable of changing us, however minimally or transiently."[1987] According to Attridge, it is thus the *event*—rather than the content—of reading novels that opens up the way to moral growth.[1988] This is what enables Attridge to call the psychological event at the root of ethical change a "conversion experience," an expression with evident spiritual undertones that captures the suddenness with which affective upheaval can modify a worldview, one that exceeds and escapes rational descriptions and justifications.[1989]

As an example of such an experience occurring in the diegetic world of fictional characters, Attridge cites Coetzee's short story "The Old Woman and the Cats," when an older Elizabeth Costello remarks:

> That was when I made my decision. It came in a flash. It did not require any calculation, any weighing up of pluses against minuses. I decided that in the matter of the cats I would turn my back on my own tribe—the tribe of the hunters—and side with the tribe of the hunted. No matter what the cost.[1990]

Significantly, when Costello's son John engages in rational forms of argumentation—pointing out, for example, that cats are also hunters—Costello responds that such 'moral problems' are irrelevant to the motivation behind her ethical act: "I abhor the mind-set that sees life as a succession of problems presented to the intellect to be solved. A cat isn't a set of questions. The cat in the culvert made an appeal to me, and I responded. I responded without question, without referring to a moral calculus."[1991] At the end of the story, Costello concludes with a strong reemphasis on the difference between an ethical action guided by rational deliberation—a "calculation"—and a "conversion experience":

> I know exactly how that process of deliberation and decision feels and tastes, exactly how little it weighs in the hand. The other way I speak of is not a matter of choice. It is an assent. It is a giving-over. It is a Yes without a No.[1992]

[1987] Ibid., 101.

[1988] In this sense, for Attridge as for Cora Diamond, we must take Elizabeth Costello seriously when she recommends that her audience "read poems … (and perhaps be changed by their reading)" (ibid). Indeed, if *The Lives of Animals or Elizabeth Costello* altered the behavior of any of its readers *as a literary work*, for Attridge "it is not because of the arguments Costello presents but the reader's experience of her presentation of them, which includes an affective engagement with the character created within the fiction." Attridge, 101.

[1989] Attridge, 101. Indeed, in *The Death of the Animal,* Coetzee uses the expression himself: "We (participants in this dialogue) are where we are today not because once upon a time we read a book that *convinced* us that there was a flaw in the thinking underlying the way that we, collectively, treat nonhuman animals, but because in each of us there took place something like a *conversion experience*, which, being educated people who place a premium on rationality, we then proceeded to seek backing for in the writings of thinkers and philosophers." Coetzee, in Cavalieri, *The Death of the Animal*,121. According to Attridge, Coetzee's emphasis here is thus on the "total irrelevance of the faculty of reason to the ethical domain," and on the power that the literary text can have in both representing and creating such conversion experiences. Attridge, 92.

[1990] Coetzee, "The Old Woman and the Cats," in Attridge, 94.

[1991] Ibid., in Attridge, 94.

[1992] Ibid., in Attridge, 95.

In his reading, Attridge thus argues that the conversion experience is the model of all ethical actions, and therefore takes Costello's "abhorrence" toward considering life as a set of intellectually solvable problems to be Coetzee's as well as his characters.[1993] And herein lies the ethical force—and for Attridge, the superiority over theoretical argument—of literature: [1994] in its ability to "stage actions that remain unjustifiable in rational terms, but that have an impact upon both character and reader, with the force of their rightness."[1995] In these readings, Coetzee is thought to situate morality "outside the domain of rationality altogether."[1996]

These anti-theoretical or anti-rationalist readings of literature help propose an interpretive method which takes the modes of attending encouraged by fictionality seriously, and points toward the importance of including attentiveness and affect into the reading experience, both of literary texts, and of other lives in actuality. They can be put in parallel to Roustang's account of the

[1993] Another example can be from at the end of Coetzee's novel *Disgrace,* when David Lurie struggles to provide a rational explanation for his unwillingness to let the corpses of the dogs be beaten with shovels: "Why has he taken on this job? To lighten the burden on Bev Shaw? For that it would be enough to drop off the bags at the dump and drive away. For the sake of the dogs? But the dogs are dead, and what do dogs know of honour and dishonour anyway? For himself, then. For his idea of the world, a world in which men do not use shovels to beat corpses into a more convenient shape for processing." Coetzee, *Disgrace*, 146. What Attridge concludes from these examples is that "there is *no explanation* of Lurie and Costello's behavior." Attridge, 104, emphasis added. Regarding the behaviors of Costello or Lurie, Attridge claims that "the explanations work in the same way as the novels in which they occur," giving verbal form to "impulses that are inherently non-rational," and through this form, conveying "the force and rightness of those impulses." Attridge, 104. Another example he cites is when David Lurie drives back from the clinic where he and Bev Shaw put down the dogs, and "has to stop at the roadside to recover himself." Coetzee, in Attridge, 98. For Attridge, Lurie's tears and shaking hands "here bespeak an overwhelming event that is surely related to the 'conversion experience'… and is not a matter of any kind of extended rationality." Attridge, 98. In a similar spirit, in "Coetzee's Critique of Reason," Martin Woessner notes that Coetzee's ethical stance "cannot be schematized, quantified, or taught, only dramatized via the unique form of the novel." Woessner, "Coetzee's Critique of Reason," in *J. M. Coetzee and Ethics*, ed. A. Leist and P. Singer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 226.

[1994] Attridge links Diamond's anti-theoretical position with Coetzee's stance. For Diamond, literature counts as an "independent vehicle of thought, putting forward a point of view, an insight, which is persistently out of reach" from the perspective of the more traditionally "philosophical realm of claims, arguments and theories." Hämäläinen, *Literature and Moral Theory*, 73.

[1995] Attridge, 104. Attridge distinguishes "two ways the conversion experience may happen: (a) in the presence of the animal or (b) in the reading of literature. And "it is, after all, in a work of literature, a short story, that Coetzee finds a powerful way of conveying the importance of these issues." Ibid., 96.

[1996] Attridge, 108. As we shall see further on, this reading is not evident for all critics. For Alice Crary for example, Coetzee merely rejects a narrow conception of rationality, working within a more extended one. As Attridge notes himself, for Crary, the moral importance of the novel lies in "the lesson it offers its readers through its narrative and characters, teaching us how we might enrich our vision of the world," whereas for Attridge, it is in the "experience the reader lives through" in the way in which "the novel challenges the very basis of our moral norms." According to Attridge, Diamond's position in "Anything but Argument" is even "very much in line with Costello's (and… Coetzee's) position," as well as his own anti-theoretical stance. Attridge, 97-98.

"unknowing" as a condition for the success of the hypnotic experience, which we discussed in the previous section.[1997]

In her essay "The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy" for example, Cora Diamond criticizes readings that reduce a novelistic text to a mere vehicle for argument. "Pulling out ideas" from the text "as if they had been simply clothed in fictional form," these readings fail to fully grasp the ethical value of literature, as they confuse the discourse of the main character with the general "meaning" of the work, or take the fictional text as an authorial participation in a theoretical debate about the "issues" which it raises.[1998] On the contrary, as Diamond argues, focusing on Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello*, "Costello's responses to arguments can be read as 'replies' in the philosophical sense, only by ignoring important features of the story."[1999] For her, if one wants to properly understand the difficulties of the questions at hand in the text, (such as the tragic suffering of vulnerable human and nonhuman animal bodies), one should attend to Costello's experience itself, to "the rawness of her exposé" rather than its philosophically extractable content.[2000] And this is precisely what Diamond does in her own reading. Indeed, she "forces the reader to attend to the silence of Coetzee in the text," and "imagine the (fictional) person, Elizabeth, who fails to fully participate in argument."[2001] As in hypnotherapy, the fundamental aspect to be grasped here is not what Costello could or does argue, but rather "what it means, what it can be, to see things her way."[2002] What Diamond highlights is how Coetzee's text takes us to "places where most philosophers seem unable to follow" its ability to put us in touch with a human predicament that makes argumentation "quite insufficient, or even impossible, or meaningless."[2003] In her reading, Diamond thus makes apparent the ways in which literary form gives us a chance to revise our understanding of what is at stake, even in the most difficult or disturbing instances, as does the hypnotic encounter. In this account, the role of emotions is not merely to provide fuel for belief, but is central to understanding itself: "The horror and

[1997] "The only remaining available path is that of unlearning." Roustang, 127.
[1998] Diamond, 53. The error committed by these commentators is thus in part caused by a failure in attention: they have "not quite perceived that Costello does not fully engage in argument," that "she cannot do that." Hämäläinen, *Literature and Moral Theory* 72. They do not listen when Costello "says that she doesn't want to be taken to be joining in the tradition of argumentation." Diamond, "The Difficulty of Reality," 52.
[1999] Diamond, Ibid., 53.
[2000] Hämäläinen, *Literature and Moral Theory*, 72.
[2001] Ibid., 183.
[2002] Ibid., 73.
[2003] Ibid., 72.

incomprehension of Costello are not emotional adjuncts to opinion but something more fundamental."[2004]

Diamond's reading of Coetzee's text is important to our understanding of hypnotic and novelistic ethics, because it rejects "deflecting" the subject away from the "difficulty" of reality in the face of which "to attempt to think… is to feel our thinking come unhinged."[2005] This is the same process used in the therapeutic context, where whenever the subject is tempted to turn *away* from difficult affect by turning it *into* a problem to be dealt with intellectually, the therapist reorients the attention toward the emotionally charged "difficulty," so that the latter can be experienced and worked through rather than avoided.[2006] Thus, a similar courage can be noted in the literary and hypnotic attitudes of rejecting deflection and allowing affective intensity into what is taken to constitute a full understanding of reality. In this sense, as Nora Hämäläinen argues, in Costello's, Coetzee's, and Diamond's efforts, we find "a paradigm of a sort of attention," of "looking—as philosophers and human beings—beyond argument," which they share with hypnotherapy.[2007] In this mode of reading, attention becomes fully ethical, in the same way as the hypnotherapist lets go of the need to extract rational content from the therapeutic interaction at all costs.[2008] Emotions, in this view, are neither byproducts nor complete replacements of rational deliberation—they are merely central to a full understanding of existence and therefore do provide forms of knowledge, albeit non-propositional, which remain unattainable by argumentation.

In this sense, the common trait between the emotional life of the ethical and hypnotic subject lies not in being blinded and blown about by one's affective reactions, but rather, in their shared ability to integrate emotional responsiveness into the reading, or understanding of human existence, their common acknowledgment of the impossibility of detached contemplation. Rather than a merely anti-rationalist conception of moral decisions like that of Attridge, one that makes room for the cognitive role of emotions in their ability to guide our moral choices and self-narration

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[2004] Ibid., 73.
[2005] Diamond, 58. A term which she takes from Stanley Cavell, and designates the tendency to turn away from reality by turning its horror—or beauty—into a problem or issue to be grappled with intellectually: The philosopher "deflects" from reality as he "thinks and rethinks" the issue "in the language of philosophical skepticism." Ibid., 57.
[2006] In this sense, "Instead of telling patients not to ruminate over the details of a traumatic experience, the therapist does the opposite. He or she instructs the patient how to think about the experience." Spiegel and Spiegel, *Trance and Treatment*, 433.
[2007] Hämäläinen, 73.
[2008] Rather than look for arguments (whether in fiction or in the therapeutic context) or providing us with a "pre-given position," such an attitude reveals to us that "our preconceptions of what the question is about may need to be reorganized" Hämäläinen, 72.

in our everyday lives is preferable.[2009] Thus, just as the "talented" hypnotic cannot be reduced to a purely irrational, affective automaton, deprived of all cognitive functioning, hypnosis and novelistic prose come together in the shared affective responsiveness of the recipient, without this completely overshadowing the cognitive, anti-mimetic aspects of their respective subjectivities. Emotional responses are not a sign of irrationality, but of increased understanding.

Nussbaum's Aristotelian position, therefore helps to delineate the way in which affect can participate in the ethical life: "emotions are not just the fuel that powers the psychological mechanism of a reasoning creature, they are parts, highly complex and messy parts, of this creature's *reasoning* itself."[2010] They are "appraisals or value judgments" in their own right, and emotional "upheavals" are able to create cognitive change, which is to say, upheavals of *thought*.[2011] For Iris Murdoch, the emotions are significant for ethics because they display the value-laden character of human consciousness.[2012] Indeed, they are "neither mere projections of our subjective states onto a valueless world; nor are they simply passive receptors of objective values we find outside ourselves. Rather, the emotions reflexively mediate our relation to objective value" and can be called cognitive "because they *tell* us something."[2013]

[2009] The tension or alternative between non-cognitivist and cognitivist accounts of the role of emotions in ethical life thus runs parallel to discussions where the therapeutic efficacy of hypnosis is "pulled" either toward its cognitive, or its non-cognitive aspects. In the context of the ethical relevance of the novel, it is best exemplified in the tensions between readings of critics who agree on the moral dimension of literature, yet propose differing accounts of the force of affect in the constitution of moral judgments and the development of moral insight. See for example Derek Attridge and Alice Crary's different readings of the ethical value of Coetzee's novels in "Coetzee's Quest for Reality" and "'A Yes without a No' Philosophical Reason and the Ethics of Conversion in Coetzee's Fiction." Whereas Attridge rejects rational deliberation as a representative of Coetzee's ethics, Crary underlines the necessity of emotional responsiveness for full moral understanding, while still claiming that Coetzee *does* include rationality, albeit in a "wider" conception, that he embraces "sensitivities that are not matters of reason in the narrower sense." Attridge, 82. In both cases, literature, like hypnosis, brings the moral importance of emotions into view by showing us how they make a moral difference in characters' lives, implicitly requiring of critics that they position themselves on how much importance they are willing to grant emotions in the constitution of moral deliberation.

[2010] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3, emphasis added.

[2011] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 4. For Nussbaum, Proust holds such a commitment to the cognitive role of emotions. See Nussbaum's analysis of the Baron Charlus' radical change as he falls in love with Charles Morel: "his world changes and this is … a cognitive change." Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 458-459. As Nora Hämäläinen points out, in Nussbaum's later writing, emotion also forms the link between the individual and collective levels, once we accept that thinking can be guided by emotional reactions. The use of narratives in Nussbaum's political writing aims at moving us to consent, with the explicit principle in mind that feeling differently will make us think differently, and further, that finding the *appropriate* emotional response will make us think *better."* Hämäläinen, 144.

[2012] As we shall see further on, however, for Murdoch, "in order to earn their cognitive status, the emotions must be tested in relation to a critical principle in order to guard against the egoistic tendencies of consciousness to build up images of reality to serve its own purposes." Ibid.

[2013] Antonaccio "Picturing the Soul," 129, 135.

Nussbaum and Murdoch's philosophical positions about the cognitive dimension of emotions are valuable to our argument, *not* because of what they say about the existence of actual objects—the idea that "acceptance of a certain belief or beliefs [is] at least a necessary condition for emotion"—but because of their role in guiding our moral evaluations.[2014] In other words, the cognitive dimension of affect is relevant as it applies to our whole evaluative moral landscape, including non-actual, imaginary, or fantasy material. In this sense, as with reading fiction, the question of belief about the *actual* existence of the object can remain "suspended," while emotions are still able to guide our understanding of what is important to us. Emotions serve as a cognitive guidance system which helps us to make choices and are powerful enough to stir us out of previous narrative frameworks without their upheavals taking away the subject's autonomy or awareness altogether.[2015]

In relation to both fictional and actual worlds, emotional and imaginative engagement also instructs by drawing attention to previously unnoticed aspects of a given situation. This is the case in both the ethical life and the act of novel reading, where full understanding will be conditional on reacting in specific ways which go beyond that of mere rational comprehension. Just like a hypnotic or therapeutic image or suggestion will only be successful if the subject engages and reacts to it appropriately, understanding the ethical implications of a literary situation requires, from the reader, an ability to *feel* and respond similarly in the ways in which the text invites them to. Alison Denham argues that this is precisely the effect and function of metaphor in the novel, which, in order to be understood, requires an appropriate affective and imaginative reaction on the part of the recipient, which often requires a subjective experiential perspective.[2016] If the metaphor

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[2014] Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge,* 41.

[2015] In Diamond's description, cited above, to appreciate the difficulty of reality is "to feel oneself being shouldered out of how one thinks," to be "throw[n]," "astonish[ed]" by the "incomprehensibility" of reality, which "unseats our reason." Diamond, 58; 60; 62; 74. This kind of therapeutic shock also provides its own form of knowledge and is able to lead to rapid self-transformation, especially when ordinary concepts are suddenly no longer operative, and change becomes effected as soon as its necessity is acknowledged.

[2016] As an example, Denham cites an image from *Anna Karenina,* where Anna and Vronsky are compared to a sailor who realizes he has drifted off his course but is powerless to stop his progress, which serves to describe the characters' moral and affective reaction to the consequences of their actions on Anna's son, Seryozha. For Denham, "if the reader agrees with the idea that this is how they must actually feel, then "he will endorse the description as true." Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience,* 338-339. Another example is that of the comparison between Swann's jealousy and the image of the stalagmite growing in his heart in Proust's *Recherche*, which, to be understood need to first be imaginatively felt: "the alert reader will… imagine an episode of jealousy in which these features actually are prominent," and "once he has formed an imaginative conception of a kind of jealousy such as *would* actually elicit some of the responses one might have to a stalagmite piercing and growing in one's heart," he is "*then* in a position to play our certain of the comparisons in thought—but not before." Denham, 310.

is successful, the act of grasping the image will lead affect and cognition to coexist in the production of a new moral understanding. The elicited feeling will have a cognitive component, revealing how a simile or metaphor can *teach* us something about a moral situation by proposing a *way of looking* linked to the feeling. As Denham explains, "it is not a mere feeling but a thought… by way of which … the [individual in question] *reconcile*[*s*] their circumstances."[2017] In this sense, figurative discourse is "a means by which subjects can be brought to notice moral aspects which they might not otherwise discern and to comprehend moral perspectives to which they might otherwise be blind."[2018] The reader is only able to "properly" understand this figurative description only insofar as:

> He has come to respond to its topic in the manner which it suggests: his grasp of its truth-conditions, while a cognitive achievement, is in a part a consequence of a shift in his… affective orientation… What he has come to see could only be seen by one who's subjective perspective features those responses.[2019]

Denham's account of grasping a literary image can serve as a model for what it means to grasp the hypnotic suggestion, and the nature of the fictional work. In reading novels, in hypnotherapy sessions, and in the ethical life alike, to properly understand is to see and thus *to have responded* affectively in the way in which the image or metaphor prompt us to.

In the context of reading literature, emotional reactions are in the service of an increase in understanding of character and reader, which can coexist with affect without being overblown by it.[2020] As Alice Crary argues, as these new aspects are illuminated, a new moral understanding is capable of "uprooting" the previous ones, which "take part in it from old ideas, habits, and social

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[2017] Ibid., 338.
[2018] Ibid., 339.
[2019] Ibid.
[2020] Many novels "invite us to regard human cognitive development as essentially involving the growth of affect" and also permit an "expansion of mind." Crary, "Coetzee's Quest for Reality," 125. Taking the example of *Disgrace*, Alice Crary argues that: "David Lurie only starts to approach a slightly better comprehension of his social world when events in his life put pressure on some of his most deep-seated attitudes, producing the kind of emotional change that he himself had been inclined to resist. Lurie then begins, very imperfectly, to *register* the fact of his own bodily exposure, and to *recognize* the importance of similarities between his life and the lives of other human beings, as well as of animals. At the same time, he starts to *register* that his past emotional fixity was a mark of *intellectual limitation*. He now haltingly exhibits the tractability of feeling to allow himself to be pulled beyond the *sphere of thought* he previously inhabited, and he tacitly acknowledges challenges of thought that he had earlier been unable to recognize or meet. In addition to thus making a thematic issue of this conception of our intellectual and moral condition, *Disgrace* exemplifies it in formal terms." Crary, Ibid., 131, emphasis added. This is done in great part with its present-tense, third-person account. The text invites readers to "share in [Lurie's] impressions as he goes through his various (largely self-inflicted) tribulations, finds himself overwhelmed by his own physical frailty, and ultimately registers morally salient resemblances between human life and the lives of animals that he had previously denied. This narrative strategy positions us imaginatively to experience a self-transformation that … open[s] to a new vision of the world." Ibid., 130.

ties."[2021] In this process, affect serves as a guide—not a replacement—for intellect, and helps constitute a new moral *vision*. It is such a conception of literature and hypnosis' ability to redirect awareness—rather than mere use of pure affect or naïve positive thinking—that should be linked to their ethical and therapeutic ability to bring about self-transformation.

Stressing the cognitive value of emotions is important to distinguish hypnosis from therapeutic models which focus exclusively on restructuring thoughts and behaviors. It helps reframe the way in which affect intervenes in the therapeutic context, not as mere abreactive discharge but as a mode of shedding light on the subject's value system and thus a central locus and catalyst of potential transformation. The hypnotic subject's emotional reactions accompany and guide her hermeneutic and cognitive acts and participate to the refined form of attention from which change can emerge.

4.2.2. Moral Attention and Novelistic "Unselfing."

As we have seen, affect is not only crucial to produce adequate understanding of situations and individuals in our ethical lives, it is also integral to an adequate response to fictional texts. Nevertheless, overemphasizing the affective dimension risks overshadowing the attentiveness which it helps guide and inform. This is why we must now turn toward the specific kind of moral attention or perception that is found in both therapeutic and novelistic modes of narration and ways of looking at the world.

Moral attention enters the contemporary discussion about literature's relevance to ethics on three main levels. First of all, it is at work in the lives of fictional characters, in "how they perceive their situations, lives, fellows."[2022] Second, it intervenes in the act of reading and the reader's moral response to the text and characters, in the various acts of "assessing their lives and their needs and responding appropriately."[2023] Reading in this sense both "displays and practices moral perception."[2024] Finally, moral attention permeates the author's creative work itself, which as Nussbaum argues in her reading of Henry James, can be considered as a "moral" task in and of

[2021] Crary, Ibid., 131.
[2022] Hämäläinen, 28.
[2023] Ibid., 28.
[2024] Ibid.

itself.[2025] These three different levels can be transposed to the therapeutic setting, which presents the same type of ethical relevance as do literary texts. Indeed, first of all, the hypnotic fictional world can become populated with characters—or parts of the psyche to which concrete or symbolic form is given—who engage in similar ethical activity as that of novelistic characters. Secondly, just as the reader's attention to the novelistic world and its "inhabitants" becomes an ethical act, the subject's careful and responsive attentiveness to the hypnotic world and its inhabitants is the *sine qua non* to bring about therapeutic change.[2026] Finally, the exterior, meta-position of the attentive therapist, as well as his or her "creative" contribution, is just as moral as the author's position according to Nussbaum. In this section, I will examine moral perception under three of its main aspects (which play out on these three different levels, in both novelistic-ethical and hypnotic-therapeutic subjectivity): the attention to particulars, the primacy of vision over choice or behavior, and the ability to cast a "loving gaze" upon reality, rather than turn or "deflect" attention away from the difficulties of reality.

4.2.2.1. Attention to Particulars

Martha Nussbaum famously writes that "to confine ourselves to the universal is a recipe for obtuseness."[2027] Paying close attention to the specificity of particular cases rather than committing theoretical generalizations is one of the central aspects of modern, Ericksonian, hypnotherapy, which, as we showed in Chapter 3, requires some degree of improvisation on the part of the operator.[2028] In the context of the ethics-literature discussion of the twentieth century, especially for the moral particularists who aim to correct the systematizing tendencies of

[2025] Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 148. See for instance: the novel counts as "a paradigm of moral activity," "the novel is itself a moral achievement, and the well-lived life is a work of literary art." Nussbaum, "Finely Aware and Richly Responsible," 377.
[2026] For Novitz, "attentive readers who understand the text of a fictional work will derivatively imagine this world" and likely "be moved by what they imagine." Novitz, "Fiction and the Growth of Knowledge," 344.
[2027] Nussbaum, "Finely Aware," 387.
[2028] As Martha Nussbaum has shown, this ability to improvise is a central ethical capacity for moral particularist views but is not incompatible with structure and responsibility. On the contrary: "the actress who improvises well is not free to do anything at all. She must at every moment— far more than one who goes by an external script—be responsively alive and committed to the other actors, to the evolving narrative, to the laws and constraints of the genre and its history." Using the examples of the actress and jazz musician, Nussbaum emphasizes the constraints to which they are bound: "These two cases indicate to us that a perceiver who improvises is doubly responsible: responsible to the history of commitment and to the ongoing structures that go to constitute her context; and especially responsible to these, in that her commitments are internalized, assimilated, perceived, rather than read off from an external script or score." Ibid., 385.

theoretical and normative—utilitarian or deontological—ethics, attention to particulars is often presented as a valuable feature of novelistic description, which serves as a model for ethical attention. For thinkers like Nussbaum, this particularism stems back to the Aristotelian notion that general rules are insufficient for guiding moral choices.[2029] Indeed:

> Aristotle's defense of the priority of 'perception' together with his insistence that practical wisdom cannot be a systematic science concerned throughout with universal and general principles, is evidently a defense of the priority of concrete situational judgments of a more informal and intuitive kind to any such systems.[2030]

As a place where we can "turn the particularities of human life into common objects of attention," novelistic texts can in this sense be opposed to a moral philosophy or theory based on general principles. Unlike the former, the latter risks omitting important or new features of a given situation, their "context-embeddedness," as well as the ethical relevance of "particular persons and relationships" involved in them.[2031] This, as Alison Denham notes, is what makes literary description and its "fine-grained modes of representation" necessary to our moral lives.[2032] Indeed, for Denham, "our moral concepts are undetermined: to know the paradigm cases to which they apply is to know very little about the diversity of circumstances satisfying them in day-to-day life."[2033] Although she does not call into question the use of rational philosophical discourse (which is distinct from literary form and serves different functions), Iris Murdoch also notes that the realm of ethics requires that we pay attention to particular cases, in all of their details:

> Should a retarded child be kept at home or sent to an institution? Should an elderly relation who is a trouble-maker be cared for or asked to go away? Should an unhappy marriage be continued for the sake of the children? Should I leave my family in order to do political work? Should I neglect them order to practice my art?[2034]

[2029] Aristotelian particularism defends the incommensurability of all goods, the notion that "discernment rests with perception" and "a picture of choice as a quality-based selection among goods that are plural and heterogeneous, each being chosen for its own distinctive value." Nussbaum, *Love's knowledge,* 57. See also Nussbaum's criticism of R. M. Hare's *Moral Thinking,* in the Archangel represents the position of the utilitarian philosopher while the "prole" is stuck in ordinary daily intuition, seeing moral dilemmas as real and indissoluble. Nussbaum writes: "I believe, with Aristotle, that the Archangel's superior clarity and simplicity does not make things better; that rising above a human problem does not solve it. I believe that we want more proles and fewer Archangels, not only in daily choice, but as leaders and models." Nussbaum, Ibid., 66.

[2030] Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 66.

[2031] Ibid., 38, and Hämäläinen, 30-31.

[2032] Denham, *Metaphor,* 337.

[2033] Ibid., 337. For Denham, "scrutiny of the relevant phenomena, alertness to specifics, sensitivity to subtle differences—these are characteristics of proper attention that must underpin reliable judgment." Denham, "Envisioning the Good," 621. For her, although "our literal lexicon of moral terms may serve well enough for highly approximate, 'summary' judgments," we require "more fine-grained modes of representation if we are to distinguish between the many different aspects of value attaching to particular cases." Ibid.

[2034] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," 375.

Providing answers to these questions with generalized principles or rules will often prove to be misleading and ineffective.[2035] One might even say that a whole novel could be constructed on—or required to respond to—each of them, given the mode of attending that they call for. Thus, if as Murdoch claims, "we 'become better people' by attending to particulars" and by "doing our best to understand the phenomena before us," then indeed, "it is not easy to think of an art form that can better emulate this phenomenology than the form of the novel."[2036] Similarly, for Nussbaum, just as we cannot paraphrase a novelistic scene without losing its moral quality, we cannot allow ourselves to neglect details of an actual situation without demonstrating "a lack in our understanding of it."[2037] For Nussbaum as for Murdoch, "obtuseness and refusal of vision are our besetting vices," and responsible lucidity "can be wrested from that darkness only by painful, vigilant effort, the intense scrutiny of particulars."[2038] As is the case in the therapeutic setting, in ethical life also, "our highest and hardest task is to make ourselves people 'on whom nothing is lost'."[2039]

Furthermore, attention to moral particulars involves rehabilitating the value of concrete *perception*. In Nussbaum's Aristotelian account, the Platonist opposition between blindness and vision which organizes the relations between rationality and concrete perception is inverted. Here, because of the concreteness of all situations, which "do not present themselves with duty labels on them," perception become necessary to moral duty, without which it would remain "blind and therefore powerless."[2040]

In the context of novelistic, as well as therapeutic discourse, this process often requires an ability to find the *right description* and encourages us to practice refining our own vocabularies, which reveals the quality of our attention. In this sense, description is a moral exercise in itself.[2041]

[2035] As Murdoch writes, "false conceptions are often generalised, stereotyped and unconnected," whereas "true conceptions combine just modes of judgment and an ability to connect with an increased perception of detail, as in the case of the mother who has to consider each one of family carefully as she decides whether or not to throw auntie out." Ibid., 379.
[2036] Denham, "Envisioning the Good," 622.
[2037] Nussbaum, "Finely Aware," 378.
[2038] Ibid., 377.
[2039] Ibid.
[2040] Ibid., 386.
[2041] For Murdoch, the fact-value distinction is a fallacy, as all description is evaluative. Similarly, as Cora Diamond notes, "the conceptual activities of the mind and the spirit in which we see the world make us who we are, morally speaking; two people may not, in the relevant sense, inhabit the same world" (Diamond, 73). See also Bernard Williams' distinction between thin and thick moral concepts, which also calls into question the fact-value distinction Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1985), 129. For Williams, thin moral concepts cannot account for the full moral significance of a situation: "a great deal of the moral job is, in this view,

As Nussbaum notes, "picturings, describings, feelings, communications—actions in their own-right—have a moral value that is not reducible to that of the overt acts they engender."[2042]

This sensitivity to the understanding demonstrated and implied in every descriptive act is at the heart of the suggestive dimension of the therapists' acts of characterization described in the previous section. This is especially important in the numerous cases where patients' accounts of their lives and descriptions of situations, both during and after hypnotic experience, tend to use primary process thinking and imagery.[2043] On the levels of both novelistic prose and therapeutic understanding, the type of awareness involved in one that allows to see a complex, concrete reality in a "highly lucid and richly responsive way… taking in what is there, with imagination and feeling."[2044] It is this process, which Nussbaum calls "moral" perception, that reveals the ethics at the heart of novelistic description, but also of the therapeutic encounter. [2045]

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done by substantial descriptions of people and events. It provides a qualitatively distinct way of formulating and expressing evaluative thought." Hämäläinen, 104. In this way, "the moral signification of a novel as a whole can be understood through an analogy with the way thick moral concepts work, exhibiting a similar intimate union of the normative and the descriptive." Ibid., 105.

[2042] Nussbaum, "Finely Aware," 383. In Nussbaum's famous reading of James' *The Golden Bowl,* Adam Verver's act of perceiving his daughter "in a certain way"—as a "sea creature"—*co*
nstitutes his moral "action" as well as that of James' text. As a picture, Nussbaum argues, the image of the sea creature is significant "not only in its causal relation to [Adam's] subsequent speeches and acts, but as a moral achievement in its own right." It is not "a mere precondition for action" but in this case, *is* an act of "sacrifice and renunciation." For Nussbaum, the "full specificity" of the image is in this sense absolutely necessary, since rephrasing or paraphrasing James' passage would change the moral quality of character, narrator and readers' understandings alike. Indeed: "If we had read, 'He thought of her as an autonomous being,' or 'He acknowledged his daughter's mature sexuality,' or even 'He thought of his daughter as a sea creature dipping in the sea,' we would miss the sense of lucidity, expressive feeling, and generous lyricism that so move us here. It is relevant that his image was not a flat thing but a fine work of art; that it had all the detail, tone, and color that James captures in these words. It could not be captured in any paraphrase that was not itself a work of art." Nussbaum, Ibid., 381.

[2043] This can be seen for example in this case study drawn from Erickson and Rossi: "when I started swimming back, I came into a net of dolls and old toys, childhood things. And my immediate thing was to swim through it. But I knew I could not do it because my fist got stuck in the net. So I put my fist out and I could still swim and I felt my legs being very strong kicking the water. And I gently moved the net of childhood things over and pushed it out to sea, so it was free again, and I swam some more. Whatever obstacles there were, different things from my family, etc., I just swam gently through them after that." in Erickson and Rossi, *Hypnotherapy, An Exploratory Casebook*, 270. As suggested in Nussbaum's example, here if the therapist had attempted to reformulate the patient's description by extracting its paraphrasable content (if we had read, "She overcame the obstacles caused by her family difficulties," or worse, if they told the patient "You overcame the obstacles…" rather than remaining at the level of the specific image), the relevant features of the image, which may also count as a "fine work of art," would be missed. In the therapeutic context, much of the valuable affective responsiveness would be lost. For instance, in this example from Erickson and Rossi, the "gentleness" inherent in both the patient's swimming and her general attitude toward the events of her life would be completely lost and the specificity of the way in which she "frees" herself entirely overshadowed. In this example, as in Nussbaum's reading of James, attention to particulars and to particular descriptions (including their stylistic features) reveals the irreducibility of knowledge to "simply intellectually grasped propositions," to general, or even, "particular" facts. Nussbaum, Ibid., 381.

[2044] Nussbaum, Ibid., 382.

[2045] Of course, in both ethics and therapeutics, attending to particulars does not necessarily mean rejecting theory or guiding principles altogether. Rather, Nussbaum proposes the compromise of a dialogue between "the fine-tuned

4.2.2.2. The Transformative Potential of Re-Vision

For Iris Murdoch, moral vision is not only necessary to grasp the particularity of situations, so that we don't leave duty "without a context," but is also a prerequisite to right action[2046]: "true vision occasions right conduct."[2047] An ethics based on attention to particulars thus centers itself on what *precedes* exterior behavior and observable action, focusing instead on the determining impact of moral interiority.[2048] In her famous example of the mother and daughter in law, for instance, "M comes to see D quite differently but *her conduct is altogether unchanged*. Here—with M—attentiveness is a thoroughly *hidden* virtue."[2049] This insistence on attentiveness is consistent with hypnotherapy's premise that therapeutic change occurs at the level of worldview rather than primarily involving decisions of the rational, conscious will. Thus, both ethical and therapeutic transformation involve changes in the subject's mode of looking at, and inhabiting, the world as a whole. Indeed, as Murdoch writes, "I can only choose within the world I can see, in the

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perception of particulars" and a rule-governed "concern for general obligations," since each, taken by itself, is insufficient for moral accuracy. In other words, the moral value of rules can only be shown "inside a story that situates [them] in their appropriate place vis-à-vis perceptions." Nussbaum's compromise thus makes space for philosophy, but as an "ally of the literary text," which will have to adapt to the latter rather than merely using it as its material. "The critical and distinction-making skills usually associated (not inaccurately) with philosophy do have a substantial role to play here—if they are willing to assume a posture of sufficient humility. As Aristotle tells us, a philosophical account that gives such importance to concrete particulars must be humble about itself, claiming only to offer an 'outline' or a 'sketch' that directs us to salient features of our moral life… And even to be the ally of literature—not to negate the very view of the moral life for which it is arguing—the philosopher's prose may have to diverge from some traditional philosophical styles, toward greater suggestiveness." Nussbaum, Ibid., 388; 390; 391.

[2046] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," in *Existentialists and Mystics,* 375. Just as hypnotic "hallucinations" are imaginative rather than purely "visual," the term "vision" for Murdoch refers to one's ability to imaginatively pay attention and thus understand, reality as it is, rather than as we want it to be. As Maria Antonaccio explains, imagination is the "primary metaphor" Murdoch uses for moral cognition, which she also describes as an aspect of vision, opposing both terms to the "distorted, egoistic form of human image-making," which she calls fantasy, as we shall see further on. Antonaccio, "Moral Change," 151.

[2047] Murdoch, in *Existentialists and Mystics,* 355.

[2048] Indeed, Murdoch's insistence on vision shows acquiring a new moral attitude does not need to be perceivable in terms of exterior, observable action or behavior in order to count as moral. For Murdoch, "moral vision (insight/meditation) and action/performance can be distinguished," and the latter often takes the role of "the test of the vision," which in this sense is preexisting. Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," 42.

[2049] Daniel Brudney, "Marlow's Morality." *Philosophy and Literature* 27, no. 2 (October 2003): 326, emphasis added. Indeed, Murdoch invites us to imagine that D has died and the families moved apart, so that the change no longer has any observable consequences "in the world." See also Diamond's claim that "Murdoch herself, though, suggested that we think of the case as one in which there is no outward behavior at all toward the daughter-in-law after the change; we should suppose that the couple has emigrated or that the daughter-in-law has died." Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," 82.

moral sense of 'see', which implies that clear vision is a result of moral imagination and moral effort."[2050]

In Murdoch's thought, moral vision first and foremost involves the attentive "imagination" overcoming illusion and "fantasy," through the progressive destruction of the individual's illusory, self-absorbed, and self-interested narratives and images.[2051] Imagination is thus the faculty with which we come to be able to see what is before us, rather than remaining trapped in our limited perception of reality.[2052] For Murdoch, it implies defeating the constructions of the "fat relentless ego" which prevents us from perceiving reality as it is and portrays it as we would like it to be.[2053] Indeed, as Murdoch famously writes:

> By opening our eyes we do not necessarily see what confronts us. We are anxiety-ridden animals. Our minds are continually active, fabricating an anxious, usually self-preoccupied, often falsifying veil which partially conceals the world.[2054]

The faculty that allows one to break through this veil of delusions is attention. As is well known, Murdoch takes her conception of the moral attention from Simone Weil, but places it within her own metaphysics:[2055]

> While Weil gives a metaphysical account of the tendency towards self-centredness, Murdoch translates those ideas into modern psychological terminology, with a nod to Freud: for her it is the *ego* which is responsible for all our errors, because the *ego* is constantly involved in the attempt to protect and gratify itself, which

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[2050] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," in *Existentialists,* 332. As Diamond notes, the notion of vision is crucial in Murdoch's repudiation of the idea of a separation between the theoretical realm and the practical, since "what moral life demands is not primarily 'getting choices right', but 'achieving in a piece-meal way a clarity of vision'." Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," 73.

[2051] The significance of the imagination in her theory of moral change is "at the heart of consciousness an ability to conceive a reality that cannot be collapsed into psychic fantasy." Antonaccio, "Moral Change and the Magnetism of the Good," 153.

[2052] Thus, fantasy mechanically "makes and uses pictures in ways which help to maintain the self in a kind of insulation from reality," as opposed to imaginative efforts which "freely and creatively explor[e] the world." Diamond, "Murdoch," 68.

[2053] Murdoch, Sovereignty, in *Existentialists,* 344.

[2054] Ibid., 368-69.

[2055] Panizza, "A Secular Mysticism?" 349. Simone Weil's description of attention is reminiscent of the attitude of the hypnotic subject. For Weil, attention is not an effort, but rather a state of self-surrender, of maximum receptivity and self-negation, a "passive activity," a silencing and emptying of the self and a renouncing of the will, a receptivity without seeking, a making oneself available which goes against the human tendency to "grasp, possess, interpret." Ibid., 350. As Weil describes it, "Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty and ready to be penetrated by the object. it means holding in our minds, within reach of this thought, but on a lower level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of. Our thought should be in relation to all particular and already formulated thoughts as a man on a mountain who, as he looks forward, sees also below him, without actually looking at them, a great many forests and plains. Above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object which is to penetrate it." Weil, *Waiting on God* (Glasgow: Collins 1978), 72.

> often results in the distortion of reality, by seeing things as one wishes them to be, or as one fears them to be.[2056]

Murdoch thus formulates a moral question in *psychological* terms, noting that what she takes as "true and important in Freudian theory" is the "thoroughly pessimistic view of human nature" according to which Freud:

> … sees the psyche as an egocentric system of quasi-mechanical energy, largely determined by its own individual history, whose natural attachments are sexual, ambiguous, and hard for the subject to understand or control. Introspection reveals only the deep tissue of ambivalent motive, and fantasy is a stronger force than reason. Objectivity and unselfishness are not natural to human beings.[2057]

In this view, the obstacles that keep us separate from reality are not merely cognitive, but those emerging from our unconscious life, including "selfishness, pride, lies and comforting fantasies," which are none other than "false, soothing, convenient and comfortable pictures of the world."[2058] Murdoch cites Freudian neurosis as an example of the delusion to which she is referring with the term "fantasy": "Freud's condition of neurosis represents this refusal of reality in favour of magical self-deception. The neurotic 'mistakes an ideal connection for a real one' and 'over-estimates the psychic process as opposed to reality'."[2059]

Furthermore, because for Murdoch "at crucial moments of choice, most of the business of choosing is already over," psychoanalysis paints a more substantial picture of the self than the philosophers that she refers to as the existentialists:[2060]

> The self of psychoanalysis is certainly substantial enough. The existentialist picture of choice, whether it be surrealist or rational, seems unrealistic, over-optimistic, romantic, because it ignores what appears at least to be a sort of continuous background with a life of its own; and it is surely in the tissue of that life that the secrets of good and evil are to be found. Here neither the inspiring ideas of freedom, sincerity and fiats of will, nor the plain wholesome concept of a rational discernment of duty, seem complex enough to do justice to what we really are. What we really are seems much more like an obscure system of energy out of which choices and visible acts of will emerge at intervals in ways which are often unclear and often dependent on the condition of the system in between the moments of choice.[2061]

[2056] Panizza, "A Secular Mysticism?" 356.

[2057] Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," 343. See also: **"**One of the main problems of moral philosophy might be formulated thus: are there any techniques for the purification and reorientation of an energy which is naturally selfish, in such a way that when moments of choice arrive we shall be sure of acting rightly?" and "It is important to look at Freud and his successors… because the ignoring of psychology may be a source of confusion." Ibid., 345; 343.

[2058] Ibid., 171-172. "Bad therapy," like bad art, would simply serve to appease the client in his or her self-indulgent or self-deprecating narrative instead of challenging these narratives in the name of more 'imaginative' ones.

[2059] Murdoch, **"**The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists," 419.

[2060] Murdoch "Sovereignty, 332. It is important to note that Murdoch's use of the term "existentialism" here mostly targets "Neo-Kantian existentialism," not existentialism in general. Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," 346.

[2061] Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," 345. The central question for her thus is: **"**Must we be condemned always to oscillate between the illusion of complete determinism and the equal, opposed illusion of total free will, like so many twentieth-century thinkers and, indeed, fictional heroes?" in Conradi, *Existentialists and Mystics,* 27.

Although this passage leaves out important aspects of existentialist thought that do not "ignore" this "tissue" of life—such as Sartre and Beauvoir's notion of "situation" for example— the central point for our purposes here is that it reveals how our freedom, our ability to choose, is heavily constrained by processes which in great part escape our ordinary awareness. For Murdoch, our capacity to choose is dependent upon what we see, and for her, we are "compelled almost automatically by what [we] *can* see."[2062] Despite this, Murdoch maintains the possibility of change, taking into account the teachings of psychoanalysis without taking away the subject's agency altogether.[2063] This is where the transformative potential of vision and attention comes into play, indicating both the limits of our ability to choose and the possibility of self-transformation, in the same way that hypnotherapy acknowledges the weight of unconscious processes and the limits of conscious, rational volition, while still maintaining the possibility of therapeutic change.[2064] In moral life as in hypnosis, change occurs neither by repression nor by conscious decisions and resolutions, but rather, by refocusing the attention towards new objects, narratives, or aspects of reality.

In the therapeutic context, this ability of the imagination to dispel fantasy has been underlined by Arabella Kurtz, who in *The Good Story* responds to the arguments raised by Coetzee about the ethical dangers of "rewriting" one's life. Kurtz' view is similar to Murdoch's in that, for her, narrative truth in therapy dissolves illusion rather than strengthening it, by helping the patient fully inhabit their perspective, instead of trying to avoid it.[2065] However, in the therapeutic context, attaining a more "realist" vision first involves re-inscribing vision in its perspectival, situated dimension.[2066] Self-understanding is thus "to some extent contingent on relinquishing the

[2062] Murdoch 1970, 332, italics in the original.
[2063] "Some philosophers (e.g. Sartre) regard traditional psychoanalytical theory as a form of determinism and are prepared to deny it at all levels… But determinism as a total philosophical theory is not the enemy." Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," 343.
[2064] See for instance: "Weil said that morality was a matter of attention, not of will." Murdoch, "Against Dryness," in Conradi, 299. See also: "Where strong emotions of sexual love, or of hatred, resentment, or jealousy are concerned, 'pure will' can usually achieve little. … What is needed is a reorientation which will provide an energy of a different kind, from a different source. Notice the metaphors of orientation and of looking. … Deliberately falling out of love is not a jump of the will, it is the acquiring of new objects of attention and thus of new energies as a result of refocusing. … explicit efforts of will are only a part of the whole situation." Murdoch, "on 'God' and 'Good'," 346.

[2065] For her, "The invitation to inhabit one's perspective—to understand and own it for all its difficulty and its complexity in as mindful a way as possible—seems to me central to the practice of twenty-first-century postmodern psychoanalysis." Kurtz, in *The Good Story,* 17.
[2066] For Kurtz, truth in therapy is subjective, which does not take away from its truthfulness: "we can do a great deal with these stories, particularly if we take the view that there are truths, of the subjective and intersubjective kind, to be revealed in *the manner of telling."* Thus, "poetic truth, subjective truth, artistic truth, or relational truth" in therapy

aspiration to perfect vision."[2067] Nevertheless, despite this apparent difference between Kurtz and Murdoch's ideas, they both help illuminate the fantasy-dispelling potential or restorying. Indeed, for Kurtz, understanding the narrative truth at the heart of therapy involves first and foremost letting go of the desire to reach objective, omniscient truth, which is the precondition to acquiring a more "realistic" vision of reality. Therapy is thus able to dispel rather than create more illusions. For her, it is a combination of active listening and of selective comments on the aspects of a life-story which "do not seem to hold" and "hint at the possibility that a more convincing underlying story may emerge."[2068]As in Murdoch's moral psychology, in order to dispel it, therapy first involves acknowledging "the hold magical thinking has on all of us" in unconscious fantasy.[2069] By working-through illusory and neurotic fantasy, it then gradually and imaginatively produces a different story, creating the inner becoming-other at the heart of our ethics of immersive restorying. In this process, the therapist's goal is "to understand the internal world of the patient, taking away the need for distortion through an understanding of that need."[2070] Significantly, whereas psychoanalysis dispels fantasy with the help of interpretation and insight, both fiction and hypnosis use the "trickery" of the aesthetic illusion, freeing the subject from self-deception by using the very material produced by the imagination. In this way, as in Murdoch's moral philosophy, we use the imagination "not to escape the world but to join it."[2071] Therefore, transformation in the hypnotic therapeutic setting fits Iris Murdoch's conception of art as a "conjuring trick" about which she concedes: "There is certainly a conjuring trick. But our discovery of the trick need not discredit the trickster."[2072] Indeed, art and hypnosis, through serious play or trickery, are able to imaginatively reveal, rather than disguise, reality. This is done by dispelling, rather than strengthening, delusion or "fantasy" in Murdoch's sense. A similar "seriousness" thus lies at the

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are also forms of truth. Analytic insight can then be defined as "emotional truth… internal truth," a truth which is "always dynamic, provisional and intersubjective." For her, truth in therapy is dynamic, because "it derives from the perspective of a living being whose external and internal characteristics change, even in small ways, over time." Kurtz, Ibid., 63, emphasis added; 11; 10.

[2067] Kurtz, 185.

[2068] Ibid., 11. Although Kurtz' arguments apply to the analytic setting, they are valid in the hypnotherapeutic context as well.

[2069] Ibid., 62. Whereas in psychoanalysis a lot of this work centers around creating, then working through the transference neurosis in hypnotherapy, it includes working directly with primary process thinking, and using this "fantasy" material directly, without having to interpret it to conscious awareness.

[2070] Ibid., 11.

[2071] Murdoch, in Conradi, 375, 90.

[2072] Ibid., 248.

heart of ethical and therapeutic change as it is found in the playfulness of hypnosis and art.[2073] As Murdoch herself notes, "Of course art is playful, but its play is serious… Freud says that the opposite of play is not work but reality. This may be true of fantasy play but not of the playfulness of good art which delightedly seeks and reveals the real."[2074]

Like successful therapeutic change, moral change for Murdoch is this "mental activity whereby consciousness alters its natural energies through a principle which critically redirects those energies away from psychic illusion and towards the real."[2075] For her, what enables the individual to choose correctly (or to change) is "an exercise of justice and realism and really looking" which shows how in ethics and therapeutics, vision comes *before* choice or action.[2076] It is in this sense that Murdoch's ethics of vision allows her to describe morality "a form of realism."[2077]

4.2.2.3. The Loving Gaze in a Disenchanted World

This reorientation of the moral or "realistic" attention requires what Murdoch calls a "just and loving gaze," a notion which designates "the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent."[2078] Rather than being indifferent or impersonal, this "realism" designates the "knowledge

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[2073] In this sense, Murdoch's definition of art as dispelling fantasy is thus a response to what she takes to be Freud's criticism of art: "Freud says that 'before the problem of the creative artist psychoanalysis must lay down its arms'. However, Freud does not lay down his arms. He tells us that art is essentially the fantasy life of the artist stimulating the fantasy life of the artist's client. The work of art lies in between, acting as a sort of concealed bribe. The formal and 'innocent' aesthetic charm of the artwork leads the client, as it has already led the artist, on towards an end pleasure of quite another sort, a sexual satisfaction in a licensed play of fantasy, which provides the work with a spurious air of completion. Art then consoles, but does so by secret and unacknowledged means; the unity and the dignity of the work of art are in a sense sham. Freud is actually too loyal and traditional a European to make his attack upon art in any savage style. He interlards his criticism with compliments, though the criticism is none the less devastating." Murdoch, in Conradi, 246. Similarly, Murdoch groups together Freud and Plato's criticism of art as equally blind to its moral relevance: "Plato and Freud mistrust art for the same reason, because it caricatures their own therapeutic activity and could interfere with it. Art is pleasure-seeking self-satisfied pseudo-analysis and pseudo-enlightenment." Murdoch, "The Fire and the Sun," 422.

[2074] Murdoch, **"**The Fire and the Sun," 457. Thus, Murdoch's moral psychology helps defend hypnotic daydreaming and the novel as directing us *toward* reality, rather than deflecting us away from them.

[2075] Antonaccio, "Moral Change and the Magnetism of the Good," 139. "Reality, in this case, is defined not as a state of affairs independent of consciousness, but as a state of perfected knowledge or perception which is reached." Ibid.

[2076] Murdoch, in Conradi, 375.

[2077] Ibid., 349.

[2078] Ibid., 330 See also Daniel Brudney: "attentiveness to the other is the virtue corresponding to the vice of narcissism … to attend to the other person's reality is to attend to her, and… seeing… that she is 'real'… To attend to the other is to make oneself concerned *with* the other and this eases easily into concerning oneself *for* the other." Brudney, 325-6. See also Simone Weil: "To know that this man who is hungry and thirsty really exists as much as I do—that is

available through loving attention."[2079] Furthermore, this "love" differs from the Freudian drives just as much as it does from mere Christian brotherly love or Romantic sensibility. Murdoch's description of moral attention constitutes much less an appeal to warm affective dispositions than to the *effort* it takes to see the world beyond the fantasies produced by the ego. Realism as loving gaze here points to the existence, reality, and value of others and what exists outside the self.[2080] This disciplined effort to turn toward the reality of other lives, to "centers" beyond the self, Murdoch calls "unselfing," a reorientation of the attention which functions in similar ways to Benson's description of aesthetic-absorptive recentering. Murdoch's use of the concept of moral attention and loving gaze can thus be used in support of the non-sentimental nature of an ethics of immersive restorying.[2081]

Murdoch's concept follows Simone Weil's, for whom "at its highest point, love is nothing but intense, pure, disinterested, gratuitous, generous attention."[2082] Rather than focusing on the mystical connotations of Weil's conception of love and attention, Murdoch's secular re-adaptation of it can be understood in the terms used by George Steiner in the Foreword to *Existentialists and Mystics:* "Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality."[2083] Whereas the "true" vision of reality is understood by Weil as following God's will, it is described by Murdoch as "responding to the moral demand of particular situations and individuals."[2084] As Murdoch notes herself in "On God and Good," this reorientation away from limited self-centered narratives, toward the reality of others—for Murdoch, toward a Good which transcends the individual—need not necessarily imply any form of mysticism:

> Human beings are naturally 'attached' and when an attachment seems painful or bad it is most readily displaced by another attachment, which an attempt at attention can encourage. There is nothing odd or

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enough, the rest follows of itself." Weil, "Attention and Will," in *Simone Weil: An Anthology*, ed. Siân Miles (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), 214.

[2079] Diamond, "Murdoch," 73.

[2080] For Murdoch, reality is a "fundamentally moral notion" in which "the realistic is also generous and just and good" Murdoch, *Sovereignty,* repr. (London: Routledge, 2001), 57-58.

[2081] Bridging the gap between the aesthetic and the psychological, Murdoch's unselfing designates the effort to "refocus psychic energy on new objects of attention" and is able to shatter the "false values which the emotions build up around the objects of its own self-protective fantasy." Antonaccio 2001, 138).

[2082] Weil, "Human Personality," in *Selected Essays 1934-1943,* trans. R. Rees. (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 28. Here, I will adhere to readings according to which Murdoch's adaptation of Weil's concept of attention as love to a secular context shows that if there is any mysticism involved, it "is best understood as an ethical attitude." Panizza, 349.

[2083] George Steiner, in *Existentialists and Mystics,* 18.

[2084] Panizza, 358.

> mystical about this, nor about the fact that our ability to act well 'when the time comes' depends partly, perhaps largely, upon the quality of our habitual objects of attention.[2085]

Thus, it is the moral psychology of attention, rather than its metaphysical or mystical underpinnings, what has special relevance for our purposes in Murdoch's conception of loving attention.[2086] Self-transcendence can be thought of as self-transformation, which shines a secular light on the notion of attention, not as "a mystical apprehension of the absolute," but as "self-transcendent, because it requires bracketing the ego."[2087]

One of Murdoch's most striking passages illustrates the idea that the loving gaze, of unselfing, just like hypnotic trance, need not be mystical, and rather, sheds light on the penetration of the ethical into the ordinary. Indeed, absorption in the "right" object, such as in the contemplation of nature, can act as a potential antidote to self-absorption:

> I am looking out of my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind, oblivious of my surroundings, brooding perhaps on some damage done to my prestige. Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but kestrel. And when I return to thinking of the other matter it seems less important.[2088]

Immersion in nature, outside of the self, is an ethical act in itself, with transformative potential. This passage recalls a case history in which Erickson, rather than basing a hypnotic encounter with a suicidal woman on an explicit therapeutic intervention, embarks on a lengthy description of the various species of natural creatures and living beings—"the flowers, fruit, seedlings, shape of every leaf on every plant… the countless generations … the migration of birds, which mankind does not understand, but fascinates us nonetheless"—inscribing the therapeutic intervention into the unselfing potential of aesthetic or curious attentiveness to life outside the self.[2089] In both therapeutics and ethics, this aesthetic-hypnotic absorption or unselfing shows that the realist value of restorying lies not in content but in the act of returning attention to the "reality" hitherto ignored in the narrow, "deluded" view.

Murdoch writes that "if quality of consciousness matters, then anything which alters consciousness in the direction of unselfishness, objectivity and realism is to be connected with

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[2085] Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," 347.
[2086] Indeed, **"**there is a *psychological* power which derives from the mere idea of a transcendent object." Ibid., 350. As Murdoch herself notes, her framework is secular: **"**What is this attention like, and can those who are not religious believers still conceive of profiting by such an activity?" in Conradi, 346**.**
[2087] Panizza, 358.
[2088] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," 369. One can note here the immediacy and rapidity of the process, which recalls Attridge's description of the conversion event in Coetzee. In any case, redirecting the attention has ethical and therapeutic power.
[2089] in Roustang, 140.

virtue."[2090] For her, one of the main vehicles of "realist" and "moral" unselfing is art, which in this sense, offers the immersive restorying experience *par excellence*. Indeed, for Murdoch, good art is an essential tool for moral understanding, as it can produce "accurate, selfless and unsentimental pictures of life."[2091] Unlike "mediocre art"—where perhaps "even more clearly… than in mediocre conduct" we find "the intrusion of fantasy, the assertion of self, the dimming of any reflection of the real world"—and like (good) therapy, (good) art allows for this process of unselfing.[2092] As Murdoch writes, "art transcends selfish and obsessive limitations of personality and can enlarge the sensibility of its consumer. It is a kind of goodness by proxy. Most of all it exhibits compassion. The realism of a great artist is not a photographic realism, it is essentially both pity and justice."[2093] Artistic form is thus a model of moral attentiveness:

> Good art reveals what we are usually too selfish and too timid to recognise, the minute and absolutely random detail of the world, and reveals it together with a sense of unity and form. This form often seems to us mysterious because it resists the easy patterns of the fantasy, whereas there is nothing mysterious about the forms of bad art... Good art shows us how difficult it is to be objective by showing us how differently the world looks to an objective vision. We are presented with a truthful image of the human condition in a form which can be steadily contemplated; and indeed this is the only context in which many of us are capable of contemplating it at all.[2094]

As Cora Diamond explains, when Murdoch mentions the impersonality of art, as in Flaubert's aesthetics, this does not imply that it is "neutral."[2095] Indeed, this impersonality is "distinguished from the kind of impersonality characteristic of science. … To speak of great art as impersonal is not meant to imply that great artists do not have highly recognizable individual styles … The point of calling such an achievement impersonal is that our usual failure to see reality as it is, is a matter

[2090] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," 368-69.
[2091] Hämäläinen, 172. This explains Murdoch's preference of realism over twentieth century novels, in its ability to picture the reality (and social) existence of other individuals. However, reality for Murdoch is not the totality of empirical facts but as noted higher up, it is the evaluative realm of a "life-world," perceptible once we rid ourselves of the obstacles that conceal it.
[2092] Murdoch, Ibid., 349. As Murdoch notes, "It is difficult for any artist not to falsify, the discipline of art must include the persistent recognition and rejection of easy natural falsification… This is perhaps the most difficult thing of all, requiring that courage which the good artist must possess… A study of good literature, or of any good art, enlarges and refines our understanding of truth, our methods of verification." Murdoch, *Metaphysics*, 86.
[2093] Murdoch, "Sovereignty," 371.
[2094] Ibid., "The enjoyment of art is a training in the love of virtue. The pointlessness of art is not the pointlessness of a game; it is the pointlessness of human life itself, and form in art is properly the simulation of the self contained aimlessness of the universe." Ibid.
[2095] As Antonaccio puts it, "perfected or 'realistic' vision… is not impersonal like the eye of a camera; it is human vision that has been purified of selfish fantasy." Antonaccio, 156. In this sense, the artistic and realist dimension of the therapeutic narrative lies in the process of learning how to cast a loving yet disinterested and non-neurotic gaze upon the self.

of us—ourselves, our system of desires and fantasies—getting in the way."[2096] In "good art" as in therapy, "consciousness is transformed through the work of imagination as it confronts what is other than itself."[2097] Moral imagination, in this sense is not about "inventing and expressing a better self and a better world" but, as in therapy, about a "restorying" consisting in "transcending the self" and opening it up to "obstacle-free perception."[2098] Murdoch's insistence on vision thus relocates the moral task from describing "free isolated individuals-actors"—as in behaviorism or existentialism[2099]—to "approximating an accurate vision of reality," which includes that of others.[2100] An ethics of vision therefore helps understand how ethics in the novel are expressed first and foremost in the selections of attention—whether through the perspective of a character, narrator, or implied author.[2101] On the therapeutic level it is mirrored by the notion that self-transformation occurs before it manifests itself in habit, behavior, or action. Given Murdoch's conception, hypnosis in the therapeutic context can thus be considered as a form of awareness which casts an artistic, loving gaze on the reality of one's life.[2102]

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[2096] Diamond, "Murdoch," 66. As Denham explains, engaging with a work of art involves "attun[ing] ourselves to concerns and conditions that are enjoyed and suffered by humankind quite generally; we are compelled to contemplate realities that surround us every day, but to which our selfish concerns so often blind us. In doing this, moreover, we come to care about interests beyond our own: we learn to feel with and for others—and so satisfy, however episodically, a wholly traditional requirement of morality." Denham, "Envisioning the Good," 625).

[2097] Antonaccio, "Moral Change," 153.

[2098] Hämäläinen, 29.

[2099] "Murdoch's talk of attending to another person, Stanley Cavell's insistence on acknowledgment, Cora Diamond's concern with the importance of being human all point to the thought that moral conduct is about more than action." Brudney 2003, 323. See Simone Weil, "Attention and Will," in *Simone Weil: An Anthology,* ed. Siân Miles (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986).

[2100] 156. The imagination is a "moral discipline of the mind," an ability to "picture what is quite other [than oneself]" and thus to "make real to oneself, the existence and being of other people" (Murdoch, *Metaphysics,* 321-322).

[2101] This process occurs in Murdoch's novel *The* S*ea, the Sea,* where the main character Charles Arrowby shifts from believing in his self-serving illusions masked as love, to a more authentic and selfless love for his long lost love Hartley, moving from envy and resentment to a greater degree of acknowledging the reality and freedom of others, as his interrogations reveal: "Why did she go? Because I was in love and she was not; because she simply did not like me enough, because I was too selfish, too dominating, as she put it, 'so sort of bossy'. I had deluded myself throughout by the idea of reviving a secret love which did not exist at all" (Murdoch, The Sea, The Sea, 498 check quote words Denham 616). As Denham notes, "there is redemption of a kind in [the novel's] denouement, for Arrowby is at last brought to see, or at least to glimpse, some of the realities to which his life-long fantasies had blinded him," which in turn trickles down into modifying his behavior toward Hartley (Denham, 616).

[2102] Significantly, Murdoch often refers to this ideal as the "magnetic" force of the good, a metaphor serving to symbolize "the way in which human beings can be drawn outside of themselves to new objects of attention, new sources of moral and psychic energy, and a transformed perception of the real." Antonaccio, "Moral change," 156.

As Maria Antonaccio has noted, the linguistic turn brought with it a certain "loss of the psychic" in contemporary moral philosophy.[2103] This is problematic, since without "a significant notion of consciousness, the idea of moral change becomes marginal to ethics."[2104] The fact that Murdoch rehabilitates interiority by mobilizing the concepts of moral vision and attention is therefore important for conceptualizing both the ethical life and therapeutic models which focus on the inner life, with its images, representations, narratives, and the values which all of these manifest—hypnotherapy being a case in point. Indeed, unlike philosophies which reject the notion of a private language or inner world, for Murdoch "'mental events exist, in the sense that there are images, speeches uttered to oneself, and perhaps more obscure occurrences which ask for metaphorical descriptions."[2105] In other words, the inner life comprises all of our picturing and narrative activities, whether overtly displayed or inwardly elaborated.[2106] This inner life, Murdoch argues, constitutes the "texture" of someone's being, the "nature" of their personal vision,"[2107] and is composed of one's "meditation upon and conception of his own life, with its selective and dramatic emphases and implications of direction."[2108] The material of ethics is thus constituted of the individual's "total vision of life," which from the point of view of the hypnotherapist, reveals itself in "their mode of speech or silence, their choice of words … their conception of their own lives … their reactions and conversation."[2109] It is in this sense that, as we have previously noted, morality "pervades" thought, and thus "all consciousness has a moral character."[2110] In this way, Murdoch's ethics reintroduce a conception of human beings as "real, substantial individuals with a stream of consciousness where perception and evaluation are constantly intermingled and often inseparable," akin to that with which modern hypnotherapists work with.[2111]

Furthermore, as in hypnotherapy (where the limits of one's world are those of one's world view), for Murdoch, differences in individuals' texture of being indicate, strictly speaking,

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[2103] Ibid., 145.
[2104] Ibid., 150.
[2105] Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," in Conradi, 103. As Murdoch puts it, "there is an inner life… in the sense of personal attitudes and visions which do not obviously take the form of choice-guiding arguments." Ibid., 105.
[2106] "Either overt (conversation, story-telling) or if introspectable are identifiable and in principle exposable (private images, inner monologue)." Ibid., 105.
[2107] The "complex attitudes to life which are continuously displayed and elaborated in overt and inward speech but are not separable temporally into situations." Ibid., 106.
[2108] Ibid., 109.
[2109] Ibid., 105.
[2110] Diamond, "Murdoch the Explorer," 52.
[2111] Hämäläinen, 156.

individuals who inhabit different worlds. Indeed, in Murdoch's moral psychology, a divergence in moral views does not involve individuals who merely apply differing "moral concepts" to a shared, value-neutral world, but persons who inhabit different universes. For her, moral differences are differences "of story or metaphor or … moral vocabulary betokening different ranges and ramifications of moral concept."[2112] A difference in moral concept implies a "total difference of *Gestalt*" so that when moral divergence occurs, "we differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but because *we see different worlds*."[2113]

Applied to the world of the novel, this change of *Gestalt* implies that a character's moral growth either involves a change in their perspective (and thus, strictly speaking, the creation of a new character), or the stepping back from their narrow perspective into a more informed viewpoint—whether theirs or that of a narrator.[2114] The process is similar to hypnotic regression and futurization where, as I have indicated, the subject is invited to observe their reality from a spatial or temporal distance, from the perspective of the "other," already-changed, self—that is, from the paradoxical perspective of the nonexistence of their current perspective.[2115] In hypnosis as in Murdoch's moral psychology, changing one's world view involves stepping outside of it. As long as one stays within the limits of one's world, change remains impossible. Leaving our world opens up the possibility of creative elaboration, at the price of the death of the previous "self" or worldview. In this sense, Murdoch's ethics of vision—where we "grow by looking"—helps

[2112] Murdoch, "Vision and Choice," 107.

[2113] Ibid., 106, emphasis added. Similarly, Alison Denham describes moral properties as being perspectival: analogous to musical or pictorial aspects, they are "configurational" or "organizational properties," they act like patterns or forms which "emerge within the sensible world" and organize our experience. Thus, when in Murdoch's example M sees D differently, "this is a matter of seeing one pattern rather than another, of configuring her observations in accordance with different categories." As "*aspectual* properties" moral properties are detected rather than invented, but are only directly evident to those who "possess the requisite experiential sensitivity" to perceive them. Whether or not one detects them depends on one's experiential capacities and point of view: "Just as one's ability to hear a certain melody or to see a certain image depends on both one's position and constitution, so too does capacity for moral understanding." As in Murdoch, "we detect them… by looking and attending, rather than willing and choosing." Denham, "Envisioning the Good," 614-615.

[2114] Of course, many novelistic characters—and actual individuals—are unable to operate this change, and reveal the limitations of their inner, moral world in the ways that it limits and distorts the perception of the "outer," fictional world.

[2115] Here the novel and its character space help us better understand the therapeutic value of hypnotic dissociation. As Auerbach notes in *Mimesis* about Emma Bovary's perspective, "though the life which illuminates the picture proceeds from her, she is yet herself part of the picture" (Auerbach, 484-485, in Ong, 190). In this sense, as Yi-Ping Ong explains, "*the world-disclosing perspective essentially illuminates itself as the limits of its world."* Indeed, "it is almost as if we are made to know Emma's world-disclosing perspective from the point of view of the possibility of its nonexistence—that is to say, as if the possibility of this mode of knowledge is conditional on a kind of not-being-in-the-world." Ong, 190, emphasis added.

underline the similar processes involved in moral and therapeutic change. Not only do they reveal how ethics cannot be divorced from a perceiving subject and their particular worldview, they use this fact to create "a change in moral landscape."[2116] An ethics centered on vision therefore helps underline the internal dimension of the "immersive restorying" enabled by novelistic and hypnotic, narratives, which both imaginatively open up the subject's world-disclosing perspective to transformation, and thus open up its existence to "the point of view of the possibility of its nonexistence."[2117]

4.3. The Ethics of Projective Imagining

In the previous section, I discussed "immersive restorying," the first form of "unselfing" or "becoming-other," shared by the narrative ways of looking at the world found in hypnosis and novels. In the final section of this chapter, I will turn to the "projective imagination," the other form of fictionally induced, temporary becoming-other shared by hypnotic and novelistic subjectivity. Rather than a blindly automatic process—as the affective mimesis of the hysterical patient was once conceived—it is an inherently imaginative capacity, which forms the common ground between hypnosis, literature, and ethics. Extending the limits of subjective experience to other "centers of experience"—human and nonhuman alike—it does so from within, by mobilizing creative capacities which are specifically tied to the experience of immersion in fictional narrative.[2118]

As we saw in Part 1, once they are replaced in a narrative conception of hypnosis, regression and futurization can be considered as instances of projective imagining, rather than dramatic reenactment. Whereas the "immersive restorying" described in Section 4.2 concerned an internal reorientation of the attention, here the projective imagination involves an outwardly directed process of re-centering, which "transports" the subject's center of experience out, into the

[2116] Antonaccio, 155.
[2117] Ong, 190.
[2118] Once again, here the term "projective" is used not in the psychoanalytic sense of a defense mechanism of the ego, but in Benson's sense of the individual imaginatively "projecting" one's center of experience outward, which leads to aesthetic absorption in the given object of attention. It is an ethical capacity in that it takes an extra step, from acknowledging the other, to imaginatively becoming-other. See Nagel: "To understand that there are other people in the world, one must be able to conceive of experiences of which one is not the subject: experiences that are not present to ourself," which necessarily involves having "a general conception of subjects of experience and to place oneself under it as an instance." Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 20.

situated perspective of others, that can then be imaginatively inhabited. In this sense, it is the psychological and ethical, inverted mirror image of the invasive "possession" explored in Chapter 2.[2119]

The projective imagination moves one step further than the acknowledgment of the "reality" of other lives and the loving gaze. As an ethical-aesthetic capacity, it leads the subject-reader to relocate "herself" and experience the world from the situated perspective of the other, which includes an embodied dimension that mere cognition is unable to fully grasp.[2120] Beyond mere feeling *for,* or feeling *with*, it involves feeling *as if* one has already become *other*. Just as the literary narrative allows one to appreciate and adopt a different "field of vision… as one's own, if only episodically," the task of the hypnotherapy session is not merely to determine how life could be different, but to actually provide an experience of it from the point of view of what it *would* be, if it had already changed.[2121]

This ability to fictionally penetrate *into* what remains inaccessible in ordinary life is crucial to the understanding of fictional works and is present in novelistic and hypnotic imagination alike.[2122] What both hypnosis and novels "give us," to use Felski's formulation, "is not just anthropology, but phenomenology."[2123] Their epistemological mode is one of "seeing as" rather than "seeing that."[2124] Furthermore, both the hypnotic and novelistic imagination allow for infinite variations of shifting and inhabiting situated perspectives or centers of consciousness. In both cases, a proper understanding of others' inner lives must reach "beyond attributions of belief and desire" and delve into the "fine grain of phenomenologically characterized experiences," into their "affective states, sense-experience, quality (and not just content) of their ambitions and fears."[2125] This ability comes into play on two levels, that of relating *to* the fictional-hypnotic world, and of relating from *within* that world. Indeed, not only must the therapist and author be able to attend to this fine grain (which, as described by Nussbaum, constitute the "moral" dimension of the creative act), so must the client and reader for therapeutic or novelistic-aesthetic success to occur. Just as

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[2119] Indeed, while possession involves my being invaded and "penetrated" by another, projective imagination involves me penetrating into the perspective and "being" of another.
[2120] It does not merely involve picturing what it would be like to become x, but consists in imaginatively experiencing oneself as x, and feeling, rather than merely conceiving, what it is like to inhabit the world from within x's viewpoint.
[2121] Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience,* 354.
[2122] As Nell puts it, a reader "who doesn't see the world of *Tom Sawyer* through Tom's eyes will have understood the novel only in a very thin sense of 'understand,' if at all." Nell, *Lost in a Book,* 282.
[2123] Felski, *Uses,* 91.
[2124] Ibid., 93.
[2125] Denham, *Metaphor,* 352.

the therapist-hypnotist must know how to read the other by "penetrating" into his or her reality, so must the subject-reader who temporarily inhabits fictional lives, which are first experienced as existing independently and then open up into being "habitable."[2126]

As Alison Denham has noted, the projective imagination's ability to illuminate hitherto unnoticed aspects of reality is directly linked to the ethical domain and thus the moral value of both novelistic and hypnotic imagination:

> What *Einfühlung* achieves is a shift in the perspective from which some state of the world (typically … of another) is experienced; and … can bring to one's attention certain facts which would otherwise pass unnoticed, for there are certain facts (in particular facts about sensory, affective, and other motivational states) which are fully represented only from the first-person perspective. The psychopath … lacks this natural capacity and so lacks the true beliefs—beliefs about the perspectival representations of others—which it alone can yield.[2127]

As Denham specifies, this implies that we locate the imagined experience as "present to some specific conscious subject," whose situated perspective will "obviously alter both the content and the phenomenology" of our imaginative episode.[2128] As a worldview is fundamentally value-laden and cannot be divorced from its perceiving inhabitant, only by being able to "think, feel, speak and reason as from points of view which are not our own" can we hope to properly understand these evaluative aspects which the world possesses for those who occupy those points of view.[2129]

To a certain degree, the ethical value of the projective imagination depends on the ability to cultivate empathy, the "sympathetic imagination" as theorized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2130] However, because the projective-hypnotic imagination also allows us to inhabit the

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[2126] See also: "To think in this way we use not a faculty of external representation, but a general idea of subjective points of view, of which we imagine a particular instance and a particular form." Nagel, Ibid, 20-21.

[2127] Denham, Ibid., 157. His defect is not "one of reason and cognition: it is a defunct of imagination and response." Ibid., 159.

[2128] Ibid., 207.

[2129] Ibid., 336. Although this ability "does not suffice to tell us how to judge or what to do, morally speaking," it "is at least necessary if our thought and action are to be well informed." Ibid.

[2130] See for instance: "When we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements appear at first in our mind as mere ideas" which are "converted into the very impressions they represent" so that "the passions arise in conformity to the images we form of them." Sympathy is thus "the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination." David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature,* ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (1739, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 319-20; 427. See also: "Whatever is the passion which arises from any object in the person principally concerned, an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator." Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759*;* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 10. For Smith, "by the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them." Smith, 9. See also Rousseau's theory of pity as natural law and foundation of morality: "La pitié est un sentiment naturel, qui modérant dans chaque individu l'activité de l'amour de soi-même, concourt à la conservation mutuelle de toute l'espèce" ["pity is a natural feeling, which, moderating *amour de soi* in each individual, participates

lives of "absolute others" for whom the subject has no sympathetic feelings—such as inanimate objects, corpses, individuals whose existence violate our own moral values, enemies, Denham's psychopath, and so on—it cannot be reduced to a simple merging of sentiment.[2131] Because the aesthetic absorption at the heart of the projective imagination can blur the boundaries between self and *all kinds* of others, it is irreducible to, and does not necessitate, an empathetic response with the other in question.[2132] Examining its moral value beyond sensibility or compassion thus offers a non-Romantic treatment of an ethics of becoming-other. It emphasizes the imagination's ability to put us face to face with the ethical responsibility of acknowledging the limits of our own narrow perspectives, and of inhabiting others' narratives even when their content is difficult to adopt, their perspective painful or unpleasant to inhabit (as in the case of hypnotic regression, or of the therapist whose client's worldview they feel morally opposed to). In this sense, the ethical and therapeutic value of literary-hypnotic narration lies not in agreeing with the other life, but in the act, the capacity to transport oneself into it, even in the absence of sympathy.

As we will see further on, even though the nineteenth-century ethics of sympathy were overshadowed by the emergence of modernist and postmodernist aesthetics, the novelistic genre, even today, can still be considered as being preoccupied with the question of the value and dangers, the possibility and limitations, of the process of imaginatively becoming-other and thus, of its own ethical relevance.[2133] J.M. Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello,* is a telling example of how the contemporary novel can navigate such difficulties. As I will suggest, Coetzee's text allows one to note the workings of the projective imagination in an anti-mimetic, contemporary context, and avoids reducing it to mere empathy or sentimentalism. In this sense, in both his novel and his

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in the conservation of the whole species"] *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes,* in *Collection Complète des oeuvres*, (Genève, 1780-1789, vol. 1, our translation).

[2131] The object "may be another person or an animal, but may also be a fictional character made of words, or even… inanimate things such as landscapes, artworks, or geological features" Keen, *Empathy and the Novel,* 28.

[2132] Furthermore, empathetic "feeling for" has been criticized for being naïve on the one hand, and potentially hypocritical and ethnocentric on the other. To avoid such pitfalls, the projective imagination must be conceived not as feeling *for* another whom we believe to have understood, but rather, as a Murdochian *effort* of the moral imagination to transcend our own narrow limitations through serious games of make-believe. In this way, vicarious imaginative experience, rather than abstract thought or argument, is what helps expand our ethical understanding, our conceptual map and moral vocabulary, by asking us to feel, rather than merely think, our way into the embodied lives of others.

[2133] The reception of Coetzee's novel reveals the risks inherent to any claim defending the ethical value of literature, which must avoid imposing didactic and moralist interpretations on the one hand, and a sentimentalist ethics of sympathy on the other. It must also avoid the critical pitfall of reducing literature to a collection of examples for the moral philosopher to use in the context of philosophical argumentation—as seen in readings which attribute the discourse of fictional characters to their author and reduce the ambiguity of novelistic prose to an "extracted" content which neglects the specificity of the text's form.

discussion with Arabella Kurtz, Coetzee offers a far more nuanced version of the sympathetic imagination than a Neo-Romantic interpretation of his work might suggest.

Significantly, readings that reduce the novelistic text to an apology of sympathy are reminiscent of the misreadings of hypnosis, whose material is confused with historical truth: in both cases, a "credulous" representation of hypnotic-novelistic becoming-other is produced, aesthetic distance and meta-narration are ignored, pedagogic or propositional knowledge or is hastily "extracted" from the text at the expense of omitting the fictional work's inherent, imaginative, and nuanced ambiguity.[2134] The example of Coetzee's novel will thus serve to underline how the study of hypnosis changes our understanding the ethically relevant aspects of novel reading. In both hypnosis and the novel, another worldview is explored in a serious manner without its content having to be taken "seriously" by the recipient (that is, without it being endorsed outside of the fictional experience). The ethical dimension of projective "becoming other" in both fields does not lie in the content, but in the act and movement of imaginative transport that occurs in the engagement with fictional narratives.

In what follows, I will thus begin by laying out the main characteristics of the empathetic, or sympathetic imagination, in order to then distinguish them from those of the projective imagination. By looking more closely at an example of the contemporary novel, I hope to clarify the differences between the two, and in doing so, to rehabilitate the ethical value of hypnotic narration, which lies in the features that it shares with the novelistic imagination.

4.3.1. The Empathetic-Sympathetic Imagination

To a certain extent, it might seem that an ethics of the projective imagination strives to revive the eighteenth and nineteenth century conceptions of sympathy and proposes a Romantic defense of the novel as a means to develop the sympathetic imagination.

As Alison Denham notes, "just as we are indebted to Hume [and Smith] for linking moral judgments to a specific operation of the subjective imagination, so we are indebted to the Romantics for drawing attention to the close connection between that operation and literary

[2134] On the contrary, instead of considering the novel as "an engagement with a character in the role of persuader," one should situate its ethical contribution at the level of the text as *a whole*, not in the isolated claims one finds voiced by the characters *in* the text. Ward E. Jones, "Elizabeth Costello and the Biography of the Moral Philosopher," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 209.

language."[2135] Indeed, Percy Shelley in his *Defense of Poetry* (1821) famously emphasizes the moral dimension of sympathy, arguing that with the aid of poetic discourse, the good man "must imagine intensively and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own."[2136] The nineteenth-century novel then took up the idea of sympathetic role taking and gave it "a robust legacy," as the enthusiasm spread to the Victorians, creating "high hopes" for the moral consequences of novel reading.[2137] However, as seen in Chapter 2, critics also feared that the novel's ability to create sympathy for fictional characters would turn readers away from virtuous action in the actual world.[2138] In this way, the problem of failed sympathy arises, creating worries that novels of sensibility might prevent the development of benevolence. For example, "imagining a sweet-tea drinker who reads a novel unconscious that her sugar consumption supports slavery, Coleridge deplores the fine lady who 'sips a beverage sweetened with human blood, even while she is weeping over the refined sorrows of Werther or Clementina'."[2139] Nevertheless, for its appreciators, the novel of sensibility remained capable of "sowing the seeds of virtue in the hearts of responsive readers."[2140] In fact, during the early nineteenth-century, literary representations of sympathetic encounters became "so influential in the culture at large that the evidence of textual and real world sympathy become difficult to disentangle."[2141] George Eliot's reworking and application of the Romantics' notion of poetic sympathy to narrative fiction further participated in drawing out the central role of the imagination in the process. In a letter to Charles Bray, Eliot defines the goal of literature as the extension of the reader's feelings: "the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and

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[2135] Denham, *Metaphor*, 231.

[2136] Shelley*,* A *Defence of Poetry.* 1821, in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. D. H. Reiman (New York: Norton, 1977), 487-88. See also Coleridge's 1796 definition of "active benevolence" as "natural Sympathy made permanent by an acquired Conviction that the Interests of each and all are one and the same." Coleridge, *The Watchman,* in *Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. L.
Patton (London: Routledge; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 132.

[2137] Keen, *Empathy,* 48.

[2138] In 1795 for example, an anonymous commentator complained in *The Sylph:* "I have actually seen mothers, in miserable garrets, crying for the imaginary distress of a heroine, while their children were crying for bread" in John T. Taylor*, Early Opposition to the English Novel: The Popular Reaction from 1760 to 1830* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1943), 53. In this context, the novel arouses suspicion due to its effect on "suggestible" readers, "so effectively does it provoke emotional responses in women, servants, and the poor." Keen, *Empathy,* 41.

[2139] Keen, Ibid., 50.

[2140] Ibid.

[2141] Ibid., 51. This creates a paradoxical *petitio principii*—still operative today according to Keen, since researchers like Hoffmann use novels as empirical proof for their theses—whereby "training in sensibility offered by fiction often becomes evidence of its own efficacy." Ibid.

to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures."[2142] As Eliot writes in "From the Natural History of German Life," the literary imagination is more efficacious than general approaches when it comes to eliciting moral sentiment:

> The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. … Art is … a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot… The thing for mankind to know is, not what are the motives and influences which the moralist thinks ought to act on the labourer or the artisan, but what are the motives and influences which do act on him. We want to be taught to feel, not for the heroic artisan or the sentimental peasant, but for the peasant in all his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious selfishness.[2143]

Here, literary discourse can "surprise" us into paying "attention" and redirect our awareness away from the self, reaching *out* toward the *reality* of other lives. Finally, the *fin-de-siècle* saw the appearance of the term "empathy" as it is used nowadays. As Keen explains, "the key term in the transformation of novel reading from a morally suspect waste of time to an activity of cultivating the role-taking imagination, *empathy*, appeared in English as a translation of *Einfühlung* in the early twentieth century."[2144] Indeed, in 1909, E.B. Titchener translated as "empathy" the German term *Einfühlung,* used by Theodor Lipps, which designated the process of "feeling one's way into" an art object or other person.[2145] As described in Chapter 3, with the turn of the century and the advent of modernist aesthetics, formal experimentation took center stage and relegated sentiment to the background, discarding realistic absorption or novelistic sympathy as "naive"—even conservative—notions, which belong to the past.[2146] By the mid-twentieth century, empathetic

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[2142] Eliot, to Charles Bray, 5 July 1859, in *The George Eliot Letters,* ed. G. S. Haight (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1954–78), 3: 111.

[2143] Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life," in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. T. Pinney (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 270-272.

[2144] Keen, 39.

[2145] See Theodor Lipps, *Äesthetik: Psycholgie des Schönen und der Kunst* (Hamburg and Leipzig: Voss, 1903, 1906) and E. B. Titchener, *Experimental Psychology of the Thought Processes* (London: Macmillan, 1909). Significantly, Titchener's elaboration of the concept in *Beginner's Psychology* mentions the act of reading: "We have a natural tendency to feel ourselves into what we perceive or imagine. As we read about the forest, we may, as it were, become the explorer; we feel for ourselves the gloom, the silence, the humidity, the oppression, the sense of lurking danger; everything is strange, but it is to us that strange experience has come." Titchener, 198.

[2146] See for example Brecht's anti-empathetic aesthetics, which recall with disgust "fascism's grotesque emphasizing of the emotions." Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting," in J. Willett, ed., *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 145; and deplore the infectious "automatic transfer of the emotions to the spectator." Brecht, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," in *Brecht on Theatre*, 94. For Brecht, emotions have "quite a definite class basis, the form they take at any time is historical, restricted and limited in specific ways" and are "in no sense universally human and tieless." Brecht, "New Technique," 145.

responsiveness and the realist novel as a genre became tainted with "a sense of social as well as moral superiority, and the suspicion that it exists only to shore up middle-class identity."[2147] As Keen puts it, with an implicit reference to Victor Nell's book:

> Experimental techniques disrupted the surface of discourse so that it could not be read by getting 'lost in a book', with the reader submerged in an unchallenging absorbing, reading trance. Inducing readers to work as strenuously thinking collaborators meant depriving them of the emotional effects they had come to rely upon getting from literature.[2148]

Nevertheless, ethical criticism, as well as cognitive psychology today, still defend the value of novel reading in creating empathetic responses *and actions* in the reader. For example, John Carey links the aesthetic pleasure of reading to its ethical value, writing that "the imaginative power reading uniquely demands is clearly linked, psychologically, with … the ability to empathize with other people. Without reading, these faculties may atrophy."[2149] However, it is difficult to unproblematically defend this claim in light of the ethical and political limitations inherent to the concept of empathy on the one hand and the findings of empirical studies of the impact of novel reading on the other.

In her valuable study *Empathy and the Novel* (2007), Suzanne Keen has explored the relevance and limits of such claims, by examining literary criticism in light of empirical studies about the impact of the imagination and novel reading on empathy, arguing that the empathy produced by novel reading does not necessarily lead to ethical transformation or moral action on the part of the reader.[2150]

[2147] Keen, 47. See for example the virulent critiques of literary empathy in Marcus Wood's rereading of late-eighteenth-century literature of abolition, which sees the representations of suffering slaves as "pornographic, appealing to the sadomasochistic appetites of persons of sensibility." Keen, Ibid. Wood writes: "the dirtiest thing the Western imagination ever did, and it does compulsively still, is to believe in the aesthetically healing powers of empathetic fiction." Marcus Wood, *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 36, quoted in Keen, Ibid.

[2148] Keen, 56.

[2149] John Carey, *Pure Pleasure: A Guide to the 20th Century's Most Enjoyable Books* (London: Faber, 2000), xi. See also: "Our capacity to enter imaginatively into the lives of others is a process of irreversible growth. It provides us with knowledge we can never resign and must act upon… What we in turn recognise as readers is the need—if we are to read with any sense at all—to feel ourselves into the moral imagination of the characters. We may shift back and forth, from inside to outside. . . but we cannot begin to understand the experience the novel presents without some participation in the moral realities within which its characters live." Martin Price, *Forms of Life: Character and Moral Imagination in the Novel* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 23.

[2150] For example: "Marjorie Taylor has demonstrated that a group of fiction writers score higher on empathy tests than the general population. … The activity of fiction writing may cultivate novelists' role-taking skills and train them in habits of empathy." in Keen, xiii. Also: at the Wellcome Department of Neuroimaging at the University of London, Tania Singer published a study in *Science* which used *FMRI* data to study empathetic responses to witnessing and imagining a loved one's pain: "When watching a loved one in the same room receiving a sharp shock, subjects showed active response in the *affective* parts of the brain's pain matrix… but not in the somatosensory cortices of the brain. The affective brain areas responded to both real and imagined pain. A person not actually experiencing pain but

Firstly, one must distinguish, as Keen does, between an automatic, "quick-match categorical empathy"—which "looks weaker and more vulnerable to bias through ethnocentrism or exclusionary thinking"—and *situational* empathy, which involves empathizing with an individual's circumstances, rather than identity. For instance, Martin Hoffman describes the former type by noting a fundamental hardwiring, shared by humans and other animals, which links imitation and empathetic responsiveness.[2151] This innate quality appears to be "biased" toward in-group—familiar or similar—individuals, and to decrease whenever it applies to those who seem "strange, dissimilar or outside the tribe."[2152] In this sense, identity and empathy are governed by "collective self-definition of an in-group and opposition to an out-group."[2153] On the other hand, Patrick Colm Hogan's cognitive view and description of "situational empathy" refers to a process which, because it mobilizes personal memory and role taking rather than mere identification with sameness, can lead to an "ethics of compassion."[2154] In the context of novel reading, because it responds to aspects of plot rather than identity, "huge character-reader differences" do not interfere with situational empathy.[2155] From this perspective, character identification is not necessary to produce empathetic responsiveness: "liking or approving of the characters may not be a requirement" for situational empathy.[2156] Thus, if novel reading does lead to increasing empathy toward others, Keen argues, it is first and foremost by cultivating situational—rather than biased, "in group"—empathy in the reader.

For thinkers like Nussbaum, there is an unquestioned link between affective reaction, empathetic responsiveness, and moral *understanding* of a given life or situation. As Nussbaum writes:

> If you really vividly experience a concrete human life, imagine what it's like to live that life, and at the same time permit yourself the full range of emotional responses to that concrete life, you will (if you have at all a

observing a loved one being shocked showed brain activation of matching emotional areas, not the sensory areas." Singer et. al., "Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but Not Sensory Components of Pain." *Science* 303 (20 February 2004): 1157.

[2151] For him, "mimicry is probably a hard-wired neurologically based empathy arousing mechanism whose two steps, imitation and feedback, are directed by commands from the central nervous system." Martin Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 44.

[2152] Ibid., 20.

[2153] Patrick C. Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141. Nevertheless, our empathetic responses can be stimulated as a result of conditioning: repeated exposure could build a sense of familiarity that can then overcome the bias against feeling for those who are dissimilar, inculcating empathic responses to others' suffering.

[2154] Ibid., 142. Situational empathy… depends upon a reader's having a memory of a comparable experience, which is never guaranteed." Keen, *Empathy and the Novel,* 96.

[2155] Keen, Ibid., xii, 95-96.

[2156] Ibid., 79.

> good moral start) be unable to do certain things to that person. Vividness leads to tenderness, imagination to compassion.[2157]

Similarly, Richard Rorty describes Dickens' novels as "a more powerful impetus to social reform than the collected works of all the British social theorists of his day."[2158] In both cases, the novelistic and moral imagination seem able to lead to actual, observable effects in the world, with tangible ethical and political consequences. However, in Keen's view, once the field of literary studies opens up to taking into consideration experimental evidence and empirical findings, the "contemporary truism" according to which novel reading cultivates the kind of empathy that would "produce good citizens for the world" is far from certain.[2159]

Indeed, according to Keen, temporary sympathizing with another's situation in no way guarantees that "being moved" by their narrative will lead one to act morally toward them. Keen's work argues that empirical studies in psychology and reader responses do not reveal any conclusive evidence that would allow us to bridge the gap between empathy for fictional characters, and moral behavior in the actual world.[2160] Although she affirms the "robustness" of the narrative empathy which emerges from reading and writing fiction, she strongly hesitates to "tether" readers' empathy to certain outcomes of altruistic action," remaining "skeptical" about the consequences of novel reading beyond "immediate feeling responses."[2161] To substantiate her doubts, she cites the example of Dutch scholar Jèmeljan Hakemulder who, inspired by Nussbaum's argument, adopted an empirical approach and conducted his own studies on the effects of literary reading.[2162] Although two of his studies demonstrated that character identification enhances comprehension of others' feelings, they revealed "no changes in altruistic behavior as a result of encountering narratives."[2163] For Hakemulder, reading narratives may thus "enhance awareness of others' emotions and motives" but "does not seem to stimulate self-denying behavior."[2164]

[2157] Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 21.
[2158] Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 147.
[2159] Keen, xv. Nussbaum's "overt" optimism has also been criticized by numerous critics from within the field. See Joshua Landy (2008), Candace Vogler (2007), and Richard Posner (1997), listed in Hämäläinen, 136.
[2160] D. J. Kruger, for instance, has shown that the expectancy of reciprocation has "*eight times more impact* on helping intentions than empathy." Kruger, "Evolution and Altruism: Combining Psychological Mediators with Naturally Selected Tendencies," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 24 (2003): 122, quoted in Keen.
[2161] Keen, ix.
[2162] See Jèmeljan Hakemulder*, The Moral Laboratory, Experiments Examining the Effects of Reading Literature on Social Perception and Moral Self-concept* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000).
[2163] Hakemulder, *The Moral Laboratory*, 57.
[2164] Ibid., 32-33, 36.

Hakemulder's empirical approach therefore "checks his enthusiasm for Nussbaum's project" and calls for an effort to "falsify theories of literature that promise positive outcomes."[2165]

Finally, for Keen, contemporary criticism often demonstrates confusion about the *cause* of the increase in empathy noted in novel readers. For her, imaginative sympathy is not attributable to the novel, but emerges in "readers themselves," who "possess the power they so often attribute to novels."[2166] It is therefore the *explanation* of the moral value of novels, rather than the experience of reading—Nussbaum might say, the theory which we add to the reading experience—that draws out their ethical value and the ways in which it might apply in the real world. Therefore, "we ought to take care not to confound the effects of teaching with the effects of reading … Readers … bring empathy to the novel."[2167]

A second, crucial objection, denounces empathy for being ethically, socially, and politically dubious, an emotion that can easily be transformed into failed, or false empathy. Whereas *failed* empathy refers to the absence of any politically or socially useful action, *false* empathy designates the "self-congratulatory delusion of those who incorrectly believe they have caught the feelings of suffering others from a different culture, gender, race or class."[2168] In both of these senses, whether the focus is on its "inefficacy" or its "inaccuracy," empathy can be considered as ineffective at best and harmful at worst, as an obstacle to moral action or an apathy which merely reproduces hierarchy and power-relations.[2169] Indeed, overemphasizing literary empathy can serve to mask a series of injustices under the cover of well-intentioned sentimentalism: "Some philosophers and experts in cultural studies regard the putative ethical consequences of empathy and reading emotionally evocative literature as impediments to justice," because they easily lead to "the empathetic individual's erasure of suffering others in a self-regarding emotional response that affronts others' separate personhood."[2170] Described by some as a waste of sentiment and encouragement of withdrawal,[2171] in some extreme cases—which a Freudian or Hobbesian reading might unveil—it has also been denounced as a form of "antipathy

[2165] Ibid., 167, in Keen, 92.
[2166] Keen, 168.
[2167] Ibid.,
[2168] Ibid., 159.
[2169] Ibid.
[2170] Ibid., xxiv.
[2171] See Raymond Williams's argument according to which reading about fictional characters in "pitiable" situations actually leads to apathy. R. Williams, *Culture and Society*, *1780–1950* (1958; New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 109.

disguised as compassion" which does violence to its object through aggressive identification or projection.[2172] The most vehement critics have compared empathy to a form of pornographic or onanistic indulgence of sensation, acquired at the expense of the suffering of others.[2173] Here, ethnocentrism and empathetic responses are closely linked. Empathy becomes "yet another example of the Western imagination's imposition of its own values on cultures and peoples the it scarcely knows, but presumes to 'feel with', in a cultural imperialism of the emotions."[2174] Indeed, using empathy to underline supposed commonalities between different, complex realities "exposes the empathizer to risks of oversimplification, misunderstanding, and inadvertent harm."[2175] Because it depends upon generalizations about universal human traits,[2176] empathy can be accused of carrying out "too little cross-cultural comparison" and of offending a fundamental notion of difference, preventing its subject of "speak[ing] for herself."[2177] A significant example can be found in Achebe's words:

> I should like to see the word universal banned altogether from discussions of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe, until their horizon extends to include all the world.[2178]

This is why "recognizing and responding to cultural differences" is—or should become—a priority over any "easy assumption of understanding" based on human universals.[2179]

Similar criticism of the failure and falsity of empathetic responses can be found in Richard Delgado's in *In the Coming Race War?,* where characters discover that true empathy is "in shorter and shorter supply" and can be easily corrupted into a hypocritical caricature of itself.[2180] Whites in particular are prone to "false empathy, a sentimental, breast-being kind," which they "enjoy" while "pretend[ing] to understand and sympathize with a black."[2181] In this sense, "the most unsympathetic thing you can do is think you have empathized with those of a radically different background. You can easily end up hurting them."[2182] Whether conscious or unconscious, this

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[2172] Keen, 159.
[2173] See Wood*, Slavery,* 36.
[2174] Keen, 147.
[2175] Ibid., 159.
[2176] "Universalism" is defined in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's postcolonial studies handbook as "a hegemonic view of existence by which the experiences, values and expectations of a dominant culture are held to be true for all humanity." *Key Concepts,* 235, in Keen, 161.
[2177] Keen, 162.
[2178] Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 9.
[2179] Keen, 160.
[2180] Delgado, *The Coming Race War?* 8.
[2181] Ibid., 13.
[2182] Ibid.

false empathy is most "common among white liberals, and is the mirror opposite of false consciousness."[2183] As Keen points out, Delgado eschews empathy altogether: "persons of radically different backgrounds and race cannot be made vicariously to identify with us to any significant extent."[2184] Sentiment, in this context, is not only impotent at the practical level, it becomes a hypocritical justification for inaction: "empathy, in this light, becomes a delusion of the affluent West."[2185]

For these reasons, an ethics of the projective imagination cannot rely on empathy alone. As I will show in the next section, this fact, which the contemporary novel has had to face in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, is dramatized in J. M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello,* where the notion of "thinking oneself into other beings" is both central to the text and consistently undermined, so as to produce a non-sentimental form of "becoming-other" that can only be expressed in the ambiguity of poetic or novelistic discourse.

4.3.2. Temporary Becoming-Other: The Projective Imagination

To distinguish the projective imagination from empathy, an example is called for. As a text which constantly reminds us of the difficulty of affirming a moral claim in theoretical language, J.M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* demonstrates the ethical value and limits of the projective imagination, in a novelistic form which encompasses two moral and factual impossibilities: that of settling for a fixed, solidified—and thus reductive—theoretical position, and that of remaining silent. In response to the question of 'what can literature do', Coetzee's novel thus seems to alternate between affirmation and skeptical undermining, ironic commentary and contradictory textual performance, which renders the task of extracting a paraphrasable claim from the text as a whole impossible. This in and out movement matches the mimetic-anti-mimetic alternation at the heart of the hypnotic experience, which, like the novel, can neither settle nor escape the ethical implications inherent in "penetrating" the lives of others. In *Elizabeth Costello,* these concerns are present both at the level of the characters' discourse and in the performance of the text itself, whose frequent meta-narrative intrusions serve as an ironic commentary on the untenability of realism

[2183] Ibid., 12.
[2184] Ibid., 31. Delgado's text suggests whites should instead work to "reject racial privilege, act in solidarity with minorities and work to subvert the system from within." Keen, 157.
[2185] Keen, xxiv.

today and the limits of novelistic discourse and representation. Nevertheless, instances and mentions of the "projective imagination" are numerous in the novel, which, like hypnosis, presents us with the difficulty of reality and of other lives, which forces us to face both our own moral responsibility and limitations. Coetzee's novel is useful to our purposes as it manifests the same *distance* which lies at the heart of the hypnotic projective imagination: rather than empathetic fusion or complete identification with the object, it allows for a mobile back and forth motion between inside and out, which combines the same mimetic and anti-mimetic dimensions as hypnotic immersion.

4.3.2.1. Poetic Discourse as Vehicle for Projective Imagining

On the one hand, in *The Good Story,* Coetzee describes "sympathetic identification" without doubting its moral value:

> I see sympathy as an inborn faculty in human beings which may or may not grow, may or may not atrophy, may or may not be fostered; I also see it as capable of extending itself beyond fellow human beings to other forms of life. Sympathetic identifications allow us to enter other lives and to live them from the inside.[2186]

Coetzee's description is relevant as it underlines the close proximity between projective imagination and fiction: "our sympathetic identifications have a fiction-like status … our sympathetic intuitions can be relied on only to yield fictional truths."[2187] Like Murdoch, he stresses the moral *effort* required to exert this "essentially spiritual" capacity and effectively reach a sense of what it is like to become other, rather than merely imagine it from an exterior perspective: "by a strenuous effort of sympathetic projection one can reach a flickering intuition of what it is like for a bat to be a bat."[2188] Centered on this very question, his novel *Elizabeth Costello* is often taken

[2186] in *The Good Story*, 52.

[2187] Ibid., 134. For Nagel, the subjective character of experience remains inscrutable because "every subjective phenomenon is essentially connected with a single point of view, and it seems inevitable that an objective, physical theory will abandon that point of view." T. Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 167. In other words, "the experience of what it's like for the experiencing organism is accessible from only one point of view, that of the organism itself." Benson, 84. In the absence of an "objective phenomenology," the best option is therefore the imagination: "we must take up the point of view of the experiential subject by acts of perceptual or sympathetic or symbolic imagination." Nagel, 176n. As Coetzee explains, "in Nagel's terms, the only true, real knowledge one can have of what it is like to be anyone or anything in the world is a form of knowledge of what it is like to be oneself. Other such knowledge may be true, but its truth is the truth of fictions." Coetzee, Ibid, 136.

[2188] Coetzee, Ibid.,136. The fictional speech of Elizabeth Costello resembles Coetzee's conversation with Kurtz in frequent passages: "Nagel's… denial that we can know what it is to be anything but one of ourselves seems to me tragically restrictive, restrictive and restricted." Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 76.

to be an illustration or demonstration not only of the possibility but also of the ethical necessity of the projective imagination.

Indeed, both in the text and in its reception, Elizabeth Costello's career as a writer is reduced on multiple occasions to an exercise in imaginative sympathy. According to Costello's own public discourse:

> There is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination. If you want proof, consider the following. Some years ago I wrote a book called *The House on Eccles Street*. To write that book I had to think my way into the existence of Marion Bloom. … If I can think my way into the existence of a being who has never existed, then I can think my way into the existence of a bat or a chimpanzee or an oyster, any being with whom I share the substrate of life.[2189]

However, this is not to say that Costello's claim should be attributed to Coetzee, and lead to any deductions regarding the author's own ability to think himself into a female character. Rather, the dimension of meta-narrative, ironic distance, should be kept in mind in a text that systematically comments upon the difficulty involved in the process of imaginatively becoming-other.[2190] Therefore, Coetzee's text pushes the question of the limits of the projective imagination, rather than unquestioningly positing its moral value.

One of the main relevant features of the text is the way in which it sketches out the possibility of extending imaginative becoming-other to the nonhuman realm. In this way, it confirms that the projective imagination need not be contingent on "in-group" mentality but can extend the limits of the "thinkable" to previously unexplored areas. It also sheds light on the nature of the therapeutic change produced by the hypnotic imagination, where the self learns how to change by imagining itself as other. Furthermore, the questions explored in "The Poets and the

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[2189] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 80. During her radio interview, her career is also summarized as a process of writing from the perspective of the other: "—Do you find it easy, writing from the position of a man?…—No. If it were easy it wouldn't be worth doing. It is the otherness that is the challenge. Making up someone other than yourself. Making up a world for him to move in." Costello's son John also frequently and vehemently insists on this aspect being central to his mother's career: "'My mother has been a man', he persists. 'She has also been a dog. She can think her way into other people, into other existences. I have read her; I know. It is within her powers. Isn't that what is most important about fiction: that it takes us out of ourselves, into other lives?'" Ibid., 12; 22-23.

[2190] For example, this concern appears in the mention of James Joyce's "failure" in fully understanding Molly Bloom's perspective due to the limits of the male perspective: "Molly didn't have to be limited in the way Joyce had made her to be, that she could equally well be an intelligent woman with an interest in music and a circle of friends of her own and a daughter with whom she shared confidences—it was a revelation, as I say. And I began to wonder about other women whom we think of as having been given a voice by male writers, in the name of their liberation, yet in the end only to further and to serve a male philosophy." Conversely, it also appears with the mention of the "romantic stereotyping" of male figures in the Victorian novel: "Of course, fair's fair, men will have to set about reclaiming the Heathcliffs and Rochesters from romantic stereotyping too, to say nothing of poor old dusty Casaubon." Ibid., 14. In readings where the latter comment can be taken as an ironic undermining of the former, the text seems to manifest harsh ironic distance rather than warm sympathetic feelings toward its characters and itself.

Animals," where poetic discourse is deemed the only form of discourse able to convey, or body-forth, the embodied experience of being an animal, underline the similarities shared by poetic and hypnotic language, as well as the capacities of their recipients. Indeed, becoming-animal is a frequent imaginative experience occurring in the hypnotic context, whether suggested or spontaneous, and demonstrates similar abilities as those which Costello praises in the poets.[2191] As one of Erika Fromm 's patients describes, for instance:

> I decided to fly and centered on becoming a condor. My nose became my beak; I preened feathers and quivered my arms as wings. Soon I was sailing above some mountains, tense-winged, and flapping once in a while.[2192]

Here, as in Costello's description of Ted Hughes' poems about the Jaguar, the projective imagination involves "becoming" rather than "being like," penetrating into the kinetic experience and mode of being of the embodied other:

> His [the jaguar's] consciousness is kinetic rather than abstract… Hughes is feeling his way towards a different kind of being-in-the-world, one which is not entirely foreign to us.…The poems ask us to imagine our way into that way of moving, to inhabit that body. By bodying forth the jaguar, Hughes shows us that we too can embody animals.[2193]

The non-conceptual, non-propositional knowledge which emerges from both hypnotic and literary imagination is our sheer animal vulnerability, the commonality that lies beyond our seemingly irreducible separateness: "Being fully a bat is like being fully human, which is also to be full of being. … To be full of being is to live as a body-soul. … An animal—and we are all animals—is an embodied soul."[2194] As Diamond argues, not only is philosophical argument unfit to express or convey such knowledge, it also risks "diminish[ing] and distort[ing]" it.[2195] On the other hand, hypnosis and literature carry out their exploration on an entirely different level. As Rita Felski

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[2191] In the experimental explorations of the nineteenth century, the process was already used to explore the hallucinatory impact of suggestion, although the latter was acted out rather than narrated. In *Suggestive Therapeutics,* for example, Bernheim describes one demonstration in which the subject becomes animal to the point of behaving like one, temporarily losing the exterior signs of "human" dignity: "I can transfer him into an animal, by saying: 'You are a dog'. He gets down on all fours, barks, pretends to bite, and does not change his position, until I restore his own personality." Bernheim, *Suggestive Therapeutics,* 60. This acting out however is merely the external manifestation—reported by the operator and not the subject—of the internal, narrative, imaginative, and evocative process necessary for any genuine make-believe to occur. Examples draw from hypnoanalysis and permissive hypnosis, which give voice to the patient's internal experience in the case histories, are thus more useful for our purposes than those which merely report the patient's externally observable utterances and behavior.

[2192] in Brown and Fromm, *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis*, 14.

[2193] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 96-97.

[2194] Ibid., 78.

[2195] Diamond, "The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 1, no. 2 (June 2003): 57. Significantly, John's wife Norma, as a philosopher, considers Costello's views as "jejune and sentimental." Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*, 48.

describes it, the recognition which can occur in novel reading operates on a level of immediacy reminiscent of hypnotic phenomena and rapport:

> Suddenly and without warning, a flash of connection leaps across the gap between text and reader; an affinity or an attunement is brought to light…In either case, I feel myself addressed, summoned, called to account: I cannot help seeing traces of myself in the pages I am reading. Indisputably, something has changed; my perspective has shifted; I see something that I did not see before. … In a mobile interplay of exteriority and interiority, something that exists outside of me inspires a revised or altered sense of who I am.[2196]

In Coetzee's text, Costello even underlines the proximity between the experience of reading poetry and the "possession" often associated with hypnotic phenomena in popular culture, as described in Chapter 2: "When we read the jaguar poem … we are for a brief while the jaguar. He ripples within us, he takes over our body, he is us. … It is much like the mixture of shamanism and spirit possession and archetype psychology that [Hughes] himself espouses."[2197] However, as the text shows farther on, just like Murdoch's concept of moral attention, such mystical conceptions of the projective imagination need not be mobilized.

For example, when Costello describes the perspective of Sultan, the ape who undergoes Wolfgang Köhler's experiments, it is also from within.[2198] According to her, whereas the well-intentioned scientist can at best empathize "from the outside," the poet can understand, and *have a feel for,* Sultan's perspective and transmit it to the reader via poetic language: "This is as far as Köhler… is able to go; this is where a poet might have commenced, with a feel for the ape's experience."[2199] However, the way in which Coetzee's text gives us a feel for Sultan's experience is neither by merely describing his bodily sensations, nor by suggesting complete—mystical, Romantic—fusion, but by giving a voice and attributing complex *thoughts* to his internal perspective, thereby underlining our shared vulnerability by "humanizing the animal" rather than "animalizing the human." Sultan's case is in this sense the mirror opposite of the jaguar example, where the poet "shows us how to bring the living body into being within ourselves."[2200]

[2196] Felski, *Uses,* 23-25.
[2197] Coetzee, Ibid., 97.
[2198] Of course, it is significant that Costello presents herself on stage as a wounded animal similar to Kafka's Red Peter, and Sultan as his "ancestor."
[2199] Coetzee, Ibid., 74-75.
[2200] Ibid., 97. "'Sultan knows: Now one is supposed to think... But what must one think? One thinks: Why is he starving me? One thinks: What have I done? Why has he stopped liking me? One thinks: Why does he not want these crates anymore? But none of these is the right thought. Even a more complicated thought – for instance: What is wrong with him, what misconception does he have of me, that leads him to believe it is easier for me to reach a banana hanging from a wire than to pick up a banana from the floor? – is wrong." Ibid., 72. And: "Although his entire history… leads him to ask questions about the justice of the universe and the place of this penal colony in it, a carefully plotted psychological regimen conducts him away from ethics and metaphysics towards the humbler reaches of practical reason." Ibid., 58. Here, the use of the pronoun "one," which humanizes Sultan, is worth singling out, as Costello

Nevertheless, in both cases, the projective imagination involves the subtle process of inhabiting a worldview from the inside, with its specific quality and texture of being, without imposing preexisting knowledge onto it. In this way, the text reveals the subtle mobility of the projective imagination, which, as it navigates between seemingly opposed perspectives, can penetrate them from within and imaginatively highlight relevant aspects of their complex realities.

Although it is often reduced to the "issue" or question of animal rights, the novel's exploration of the limits of the projective imagination extend far beyond the animal's perspective, toward *absolute* otherness, and objects with which it is difficult for the subject to establish commonality or sympathetic feelings. Whereas the hypnotic imagination allows access to such imaginings, mere empathy does not. Indeed, in the rest of the text, the imaginative "thought experiment" is pushed further and further, toward inhabiting more uncomfortable, quasi-unimaginable perspectives.[2201] The most striking of these is Costello's description of her non-abstract knowledge of what it is like to be a corpse:

> "For instants at a time," his mother is saying, "I know what it is like to be a corpse. The knowledge repels me. It fills me with terror; I shy away from it, refuse to entertain it. All of us have such moments, particularly as we grow older. The knowledge we have is not abstract. … For a moment we are that knowledge. We live the impossible: we live beyond our death, look back on it, yet look back as only a dead self can."[2202]

It is precisely this "living the impossible" that the hypnotic imagination allows, with the "looking back" enabled by hypnotic dissociation.

Similarly, in "The Humanities in Africa" Costello imagines and describes what it is like to sympathetically understand and attend to the suffering and erotic desire of Mr. Phillips—her mother's ex-lover—whose aging body is slowly dying of cancer. In this "Lesson," Costello's response consists in visiting the old man and engaging in sexual acts although she feels neither warmth nor erotic desire toward him. Her action is described as stemming from an

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often uses it to refer to herself. Here it seems to suggest both the presence of a first-person pronoun type thinking, with an added capacity for generalization and abstraction, moving the "I" toward the indefinite "one." At the same time, it mirrors the exterior perspective which the human scientists have on Sultan, who is but a representative of a genus or species, one among many other possible interchangeable members of a type, not an individual worthy of the care and respect that are reserved for human individuals.

[2201] As Costello notes, this question is ethically important as it sheds light on our own limitations: "Are there other modes of being besides what we call the human into which we can enter; and if there are not, what does that say about us and our limitations?" Ibid., 188.

[2202] Ibid., 77. In this sense, the passage describing the embodied experience of the frogs dying in the summer then returning to life with the first rains echoes Costello's knowledge described here, by "combining' it with the animal perspective. Ibid., 219-220. See also visualization exercises in Theravada Buddhism where the advanced practitioner pictures themselves as a rotting corpse from within, and practices of "past life regression" in New Age branches of hypnotherapy, both of which support the parallel between the novelistic and hypnotic-absorbed imagination in their common ability to "live the impossible."

acknowledgment of the pain, fear and vulnerability of the old man's dying body, into which as a younger ageing body, she is able to breathe a flicker of life, thanks to the force of erotic desire. In Coetzee's text, however, the description is strikingly cold, devoid of empathetic warmth or sentiment, based on the recognition of a mutual condition, but stripped of sentimentalism: "just … an old bag of bones waiting to be carted away."[2203] At the other end of the spectrum, in "Eros," Costello directs the projective imagination in the opposite direction, musing about what it is like to become a god and engage in sexual intercourse with one. In these passages, the imagination is able to "humanize" the gods by attributing to them anthropomorphized traits and human erotic desire from within.[2204] Conversely, it simultaneously extends the human perspective toward becoming-them *via* embodied imagining: "Can we be one with a god profoundly enough to apprehend, to get a sense of, a god's being?"[2205] In this sense, both poles are directed toward each other by being extended, that is, explored from within this flexibility of the hypnotic-novelistic, projective, imagination. All of these examples involve stretching the limits of the imagination and relinquishing theoretical understanding in order to acknowledge a common, vulnerable or desiring embodiedness, shared by all mortal beings. In Coetzee's text, on two simultaneous—diegetic and extradiegetic—levels, "sympathy" therefore applies less to the content than to the worldview that is expressed and to the being—the body-soul or wounded animal—who expresses it. As an aesthetic capacity, it has a profoundly ethical dimension, and its mobilization, both in hypnosis and in literature, is simultaneously an invitation to examine our own limitations, our openness or closedness to other, vulnerable lives.[2206]

[2203] Ibid., 151. "No mistaking the signs. Not a spry old fellow any longer, just an old fellow, an old bag of bones waiting to be carted away. Flat on his back with his arms spread out, his hands slack, hands that have in the space of a month become so blue and knobbly that you wonder they were ever fit to hold a brush. Not sleeping, just lying, waiting. Listening too, no doubt, to the sounds inside, the sounds of the pain. (Let us not forget that, Blanche, she thinks to herself: let us not forget the pain. The terrors of death not enough: on top of them the pain, crescendo. As a way of putting to a close our visit to this world, what could be more ingeniously, more devilishly cruel?)." Ibid., 151-152.

[2204] Ibid., 190. "What she knows for certain about the gods is that they peek at us all the time, peek even between our legs, full of curiosity, full of envy; sometimes does that curiosity really run? Aside from our erotic gifts, are they curious about us, their anthropological specimens, to the degree that we in turn are curious about chimps, or about birds, or about flies?" Ibid., 190. (For the examples of Psyche, Mary, and Anchises, see 185-187). Here of course, the text invites us to think ourselves into the being of animals via the gaze of the gods, to whom we appear as such. The process is strikingly similar to the "mental progression" techniques used in hypnosis: imagining one's present day self through the gaze of a "higher" (or future) perspective.

[2205] Ibid., 188.

[2206] Costello's multiple exhortations and injunctions toward her interlocutors simultaneously reverberate onto the "attentive" reader: "just as Elizabeth Costello encourages her audience members to 'think their way into the being' of animals, Coetzee encourages us to imagine Costello's own disturbing view of the world, and thereby to understand her pain." Ward E. Jones, "Elizabeth Costello and the Biography of the Moral Philosopher," 215.

In this sense, just as moral differences for Murdoch are differences in *Gestalt,* the use of the projective imagination in Coetzee reveals that moral failure can be considered as failure in attention and imagination, both in characters and in the reader, and that general principles are insufficient to guide us, both at the therapeutic and the ethical level. Indeed, in both cases, "a person with narrow imaginative capacities is pictured as morally limited, capable only of acting according to rules and according to the limited perceptions which are possible due to the limits of the creative imagination."[2207] The most striking manifestation of this idea is Costello's controversial and disturbing analogy between mass animal slaughter for meat consumption and the horror of the Holocaust, which she explains by the same failure in moral attention.[2208] With such passages, the text shocks the reader into examining their own responsibility in exercising this faculty:

> There are people who have the capacity to imagine themselves as someone else, there are people who have no such capacity (when the lack is extreme, we call them psychopaths), and there are people who have the capacity but choose not to exercise it … in a huge communal effort, we close our hearts… We can do anything, it seems, and come away clean.[2209]

While it cannot guarantee the exercise of attention (just like the therapeutic session cannot guarantee the success of the outcome), the ethical relevance of the literary text lies in its ability to show, rather than produce arguments about, the difference between a worldview that uses the projective imagination, and one that cannot or does not. Richard Rorty's reading of Nabokov's *Lolita* points to a similar contention, by interpreting Humbert Humbert and his moral blindness as a kind of "moral disorder or disability, which a certain kind of reader may recognize in himself."[2210] In this way, novelistic literature demonstrates how the inclusion of explicitly moral content into its body is irrelevant to its moral value. Rather, the ethical relevance of both hypnotic and novelistic narration lies in their ability to present us with fictional lives or worlds, which, when

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[2207] Hämäläinen, 29.

[2208] "The particular horror of the camps, the horror that convinces us that what went on there was a crime against humanity, is not that despite a humanity shared with their victims, the killers treated them like lice. That is too abstract. The horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims, as did everyone else. They said, 'It is they in those cattle cars rattling past'. They did not say, 'How would it be if it were I in that cattle car?' They did not say, 'It is I who am in that cattle car'. They said, 'It must be the dead who are being burned today, making the air stink and falling in ash on my cabbages'" Coetzee, 79.

[2209] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 79-80.

[2210] Hämäläinen, 125. As Rorty argues, "the moral is not to keep one's hands off of little girls but to notice what one is doing, and in particular to notice what people are saying. For it… very often does turn out, that people are trying to tell you that they are suffering." Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, 164. Humbert Humbert's moral type in this sense is "not that of the child molester but that of the morally blind person." Hämäläinen, 125.

we face them, also force us to face our own responsibility and limitations. Both invite the reader-subject to examine the texture of their own, internal ethical world.

4.3.2.2. Novelistic Ambiguity as an Ethical Gesture

As Patrick Hayes and Jan Wilm note in the introduction of *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel*:

> Nussbaum has sought to demonstrate how useful literature can be as a supplement to moral philosophy, most especially through its capacity to put moral abstractions in touch with the particularity of experience. In "The Novel Today" Coetzee took up a position that can only be described as an *extreme rejection* of this long tradition.[2211]

Indeed, in "the Novel Today" Coetzee strongly rejects what he calls the 'novel of supplementarity'—where literature is in service to philosophy—describing it as "not merely a domestication but an infantilization of literature … as a child's schoolwork is checked by a schoolmistress."[2212] However, like Nabokov's, Coetzee's novels often do more than what the author claims in his interviews or essays, by complicating *both* naive and skeptical positions regarding their ethical value.[2213] This ability stems from the very "intelligence" with which they resist "the blunt alternatives" defined above.[2214]

Indeed, while it is often considered as a *defense* of the sympathetic imagination, Coetzee's novel complicates its ethical stance by inserting frequent contradictions between what it does and what it says. For instance, when Costello herself is pressed to produce a clear argument about the efficacy of poetic discourse in creating empathetic responses and actual change in the world, her interrogators are often met with skeptical, ambiguous responses:

> Do you really believe, Mother, that poetry classes are going to close down the slaughterhouses?' —"No." —"Then why do it? … isn't poetry just another kind of clever talk…? Wasn't your point about talk that it changes nothing?[2215]

[2211] Hayes and Wilm, *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel,* 10, emphasis added.

[2212] Coetzee, in Hayes and Wilm, 10. The "novel of rivalry" on the other hand—in which literature is in service to itself—is autonomous, "operates in terms of its own procedures and issues in its own conclusions," and "evolves its own paradigms and myths, in the process… perhaps even going so far as to show up the mythic status of history—in other words, demythologizing history'." Ibid., 10. Coetzee even proposes the analogy of the cockroach to describe literature: "a scavenger, a creature that keeps to itself and does not do another's business (unlike, say, a dog, which can be loyal and obedient if it is properly domesticated)," thereby indicating the "low" and insular quality of the novel, suggesting that we stay wary of interpreting as illustrating philosophical arguments or actual historical situations. Ibid.

[2213] In this sense, "what makes Coetzee such an interesting writer to think about in relation to the 'ancient quarrel' is the extent to which his fiction registers and *explores this conflict between 'supplementarity' and 'rivalry'*," rather than adopting a fixed, unilateral position. Hayes and Wilm, 10.

[2214] Hayes and Wilm, 10;

[2215] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 103. See also: "Her first inclination would be to say no. Her books certainly evince no faith in art. … Her books teach nothing, preach nothing." Conforming to postmodern tradition, Coetzee's text often associates poetry and philosophy with mere "*talk*," but does so to construct a strong opposition between (literary)

Here, at the level of content, serious doubt is cast upon art's ability to create change in the actual world. While in her youth Costello still believed in the guiding power of literary texts,[2216] in her old age she is described as having grown to suspect their unquestioned moral benefits: "she no longer believes that storytelling is good in itself."[2217] In fact, at her talk in Amsterdam, she even reawakens the Ancient Quarrel, arguing that writing "has the potential to be dangerous," as it risks making the reader complicit with the "evils" which it describes.[2218] The claim about the impotence of literature is taken beyond mere disillusionment, its potential for moral degradation is repeatedly evoked, turning the argument in favor of its ethical power against itself: "if what we write has the power to make us better people then surely it has the power to make us worse."[2219] As we have seen in Chapter 2, this is precisely the sort of criticism addressed to hypnosis in conceptions which neglect the activity and responsibility of the hypnotic subject.[2220] In the final Lesson, "At the Gate," Costello transposes these moral "dangers" to her own position as a writer—and not merely as a reader—notifying her judges that she is open to "all voices, not just the victims. … If it is their murderers and violators who choose to summon me instead, to use me and speak through me, I will not close my ears to them, I will not judge them."[2221] Moral neutrality or skepticism, detachment from history and ethical dilemmas, seem to constitute the positions attributed to the

discourse and (ethical) action: "If she, as she is nowadays, had to choose between telling a story and doing good, she would rather, she thinks, do good." Ibid., 207; 167.

[2216] "In our truest reading, as students, we searched the page for guidance, guidance in perplexity… in how to live our lives." Coetzee, 127.

[2217] Ibid., 167.

[2218] Ibid., 162. Costello's discomfort emerges from the moral horror she experiences at having been "seduced" by the aestheticizing violence in Paul West's description of the execution of Hitler's failed assassins: "Obscene because such things ought not to take place, and then obscene again because having taken place they ought not to be brought into the light but covered up and hidden for ever in the bowels of the earth, like what goes on in the slaughterhouses of the world. … Scenes that do not belong in the light of day, that the eyes of maidens and children deserve to be shielded from." Coetzee, 159. Here, the novel complicates the question even further, as the skeptical position is itself undermined by language reminiscent of simplistic and moralizing discourse advocating censorship, adding layer upon layer of doubt to the original claim. In this sense, the detailed—and disturbing—passage describing Elizabeth's violent rape can then be considered as a potentially ironic performance of the very "evil" deplored by Costello a few pages before, once more complicating the claims that one might be tempted to extract from the novel. Ibid., 165.

[2219] Ibid., 171.

[2220] A similar criticism is addressed to hypnotism, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Keen makes a parallel claim: on the one hand she doubts the ability of art to impact the actual world yet she also underlines the moral dangers attributed to it: "Novels can be dangerous. They convey disturbing ideas. They awake strange desires. They invite identification with criminals and prostitutes and assassins. They give people, not just children, nightmares that they can't forget. Years ago my parents put the hard cover first editions inside the bookcases with the leaded glass doors. These were banned books. The Updike with the three-way sex, the signed Isaac Singers, the valuable collection of Horatio Algers. You bet I read them" Keen. 64.

[2221] Coetzee, 204.

disillusioned and "autonomous" writer, who in this description is more reminiscent of the "possessed," mimetic or passive hypnotic subject that merely channels an exterior discourse without exercising proper agency over it.

Nevertheless, a clear distinction between authorial and character discourse shows that regardless of the "moral quality" of the voices or events which it bodies forth, literature preserves its ethical relevance, not by convincing us that a given perspective should be adopted, but by showing us, as does hypnosis, what it would be like to inhabit the world from that position. This then allows the reader-subject to emerge from the experience with an ability to better define their own worldview. Indeed, as Hilary Putnam argues:

> [When I read Céline], I do not learn that love does not exist, that all human beings are hateful and hating… What I learn is to see the world as it looks to someone who is sure that hypothesis is correct. I see what plausibility that hypothesis has: what it would be like if it *were* true; how someone could possibly think that it is true… This is a kind of knowledge. It is knowledge of a possibility. It is *conceptual* knowledge.[2222]

Whether it depicts ordinary, everyday moral failures, or lets "murderers and violators" speak "through" it, the literary text still serves to enrich our conceptual map and provide ethical knowledge about the possibility it describes. The reader can then react to this possibility of a worldview which adopts problematic hypotheses—a process which, as I have suggested is not merely intellectual but also affective—thereby refining or strengthening their own worldview and value system. In this sense, novelistic description, regardless of its objects, is ethical in and of itself. Thus, despite Nabokov's insistence on the purely aesthetic nature of artistic creation, his novelistic "practice," as Rorty has shown, can be thought to disprove the claims made by "Nabokov the theorist."[2223] According to Rorty, Nabokov's "greatest creations" are in fact "people whom [he] himself loathes," and who "dramatize the particular form of cruelty about which [he] worried most—incuriosity."[2224] Nabokov's novels are thus ethical in the same way as some of Coetzee's novels, such as *Disgrace,* can be. They portray "cruelty from the inside, helping us see the way in which the private pursuit of aesthetic bliss leads us to be incurious" about others and their suffering, a process which not only Costello denounces, but also manifests herself towards others.[2225] In this sense, the ethical value of the novel is to remind us that we too—both as readers

[2222] Putnam, "Literature, Science, Reflection." In *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1979), 488.
[2223] 167. Nabokov the theorist *claims* that the "effect produced by style as opposed to that produced by participative emotion—is *all* that matters." Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, 147.
[2224] Rorty, 158.
[2225] Ibid., 146. Rorty's reading shows that Nabokov "knew quite well that ecstasy and tenderness… tend to preclude each other... This is the 'moral' knowledge that his novels help us acquire, and to which his aestheticism rhetoric is

and as individuals—are "only *selectively* curious."[2226] By portraying characters who, like Humbert Humbert or David Lurie, suffer from "lack of curiosity" and "inattentiveness to anything irrelevant to [their] own obsession," the text reminds us that we are no different: "the reader, suddenly revealed to himself as, if not hypocritical, at least cruelly incurious recognizes his *semblable,* his brother."[2227]

By exposing us to the fictional world and its characters, without omitting any of the concerns that it might raise about itself, the text helps us exercise our discriminating thinking, which we may, if we wish, carry with us back into the real world, just as the hypnotic subject might apply the skills obtained during the session in their ordinary life. This knowledge, which literature provides by showing us what the world would look like from the perspective of a moral-other, can enrich our conceptual framework even if it is not conveyed by conceptual means. In *Elizabeth Costello*, it is moral outrage triggered by novel reading which leads Costello to "act" in the world and give her lecture in Amsterdam, despite the "fiasco" at Appleton college. Indeed, it is the act of *reading* Paul West's novel—of being shocked by its "obscenity," that is, of experiencing the disturbing "power" of literature—that dissolves the skepticism which leads to moral apathy: "what hope is there that the problem of evil … will be solved by more talk? But at the time the invitation came *she was under the malign spell of a novel she was reading*."[2228] It is the *spell* and its affective impact that lead Costello to accept the invitation. Once more, as in the therapeutic context, the affective power of reading—even unpleasant—here seems more efficacious than content to transform inertia into "action." Conversely, if we as readers are persuaded by anything in the novel, it is not by the characters' discourse, but by the experience of reading the novel *qua novel*, by being submitted to its content-form,[2229] its body-soul, with the irreducible tensions, woundedness, difficulties and ambiguities which it expresses. As Costello tells the board of judges in "At the

irrelevant. He knows quite well that the pursuit of autonomy is at odds with feelings of solidarity… that writers can obtain and produce ecstasy while failing to notice suffering, while being incurious about the people whose lives provide their material…. So he creates characters both ecstatic and cruel, noticing and heartless. … What he fears most is that one cannot have it both ways—that there is no synthesis of ecstasy and kindness." Ibid., 159-160.

[2226] Ibid., 160.

[2227] Ibid., 163.

[2228] Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello,* 157, emphasis added.

[2229] For Denham, stylistic form and affective reactions of the reader are all part of the "content" of a novel: "Like paraphrases of good metaphors, summaries of good novels… can fail to convey the very considerations which… constitute their distinctive content," which is "in part constituted by the aspects it represents, for aspects are themselves in part constituted by our responses." Denham, *Metaphor,* 351). Where the responses are absent (as in paraphrase or summary), "there will be no such distinctive content to discern." Ibid., 351.

Gate," beliefs are "not the only ethical supports we have. We can rely on our hearts as well. That is all. I have nothing more to say."[2230]

Although it claims not to, Coetzee's novel does make a claim, even if it is not a philosophical argument about the lives, or rights, of animals.[2231] As Coetzee notes himself in *Doubling the Point,* ending a novel necessarily involves "confronting head-on the endlessness of its skepticism."[2232] Rather than provide philosophical solutions, Coetzee "dramatize[s] the problem and gives it form in the novelistic universe, bodying-it forth in the various counter voices which inhabit it," as does hypnotic narration.[2233] The ambiguity of its "claim" is ethical as it manifests a greater consideration for the nuances and difficulties of a given situation, rather than a tendency to oversimplify in the name of clarification. Indeed, as Iris Murdoch writes:

> It is very well to say that one should always attempt a full understanding and a precise description, but to say that one can always be confident that one has understood seems plainly unrealistic…There are times when it is proper to stress, not the comprehensibility of the world, but its incomprehensibility…There are… moments when situations are unclear and what is needed is not a renewed attempt to specify the facts, but a fresh vision which may be derived from a 'story' or from some sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure, and represents a 'mode of understanding' of an alternative type.[2234]

Therefore, labelling Costello as "confused" demonstrates not only a misunderstanding of the nature of fictional discourse and ambiguity of the literary text, it also manifests ethical obtuseness in its failure to imaginatively project into the claim of the novel, into a worldview that admits ambiguity as an integral part of reality and its difficulty.[2235] As I have suggested, this is a worldview shared by the novel and hypnosis alike.

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[2230] Coetzee, 203.
[2231] From this perspective, novels function in the same way as indirect hypnotic suggestions: they covertly do what they claim not to
[2232] Coetzee, *Doubling the Point*, 248.
[2233] Attridge, 103. Like therapeutic narratives, "the best fiction… seldom pronounces decisively on moral issues. It does not offer dogmatic or authoritative solutions to problems of value. Rather… fiction is often at its most exciting, and instructs us most adequately in matters of value, when it explores moral problems and brings its readers to see them in their fullness and complexity" Novitz, 355.
[2234] Murdoch 1956, 50-51. Similarly, the hypnotic narrative does not need to specify the facts or extract rational insight from the therapeutic material, but merely re-describes and reframes them in a new vision.
[2235] The philosophical power of the novel thus lies in the specificity of its genre and form, or as Vincent Descombes puts it, in "the express reasons the author would have given—had he been asked, and had he taken the trouble to formulate them—for his choice of the novel in preference to other forms." Descombes, *Proust, Philosophy of the Novel,* trans. C. C. Macksey (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 14.

In *The Good Story,* Coetzee himself describes the "learning" one gets from books as a "quintessential" experience, a "feeling of growing beyond yourself, of leaving your old self behind and becoming a new, better self … a form of ecstasy or ek-stasis."[2236] The projective imagination is based on this movement of exiting the self, of opening up to the other, which unlike what is implied by the mimetic conceptions of hypnosis cited at the beginning of this chapter, cannot be reduced to a mere loss of self. On the contrary, in both hypnosis and novel reading, it constitutes an indirect, mediated way of finding one's way back to the self, an imaginary detour which allows for its re-creation and re-definition—either with, or against, the lives that it invites us to temporarily embody. The relation between fictional lives and our actual life is thus not one of direct transposition—for example of a moral maxim or rule, or a therapeutic principle—but rather of cultivating our capacities to attend—to be attentive and to relate—which texts invite us to adopt toward fictional objects. Like indirect hypnosis, the novel's "nonillustrative demonstration" thus operates as it "nudges or *maneuvers* people into a position in which something becomes apparent. It is more like a gesture than a statement."[2237] The ethical claim of the projective imagination is therefore made by *showing* us what it is like to temporarily become-other.[2238]

As I have argued, this temporary embodying entails neither feeling sympathetic or empathetic toward other lives, nor does it involve adhering to a given worldview or value system.[2239] Rather, it cultivates the reader-subject's capacity to attend to previously unnoticed aspects of a particular situation, or individual life. As Nora Hämäläinen suggests, even when we are not empathetically moved by the "detailed perception" of a fictional character's situation, "this 'mere' perception may be relevant for real-life needs of 'full' moral perception."[2240] As I have shown, its ethical value is in great part linked to its ability to extend our concept of what it means to "know," by incorporating attention to the irreducible particularity and complexity of reality into our modes of understanding. As Hilary Putnam notes:

> Literature does not … depict solutions. What especially the novel does is aid us in the imaginative re-creation of moral perplexities… If moral reasoning is the conscious criticism of ways of life, then the sensitive

[2236] Coetzee, *The Good Story,* 178.
[2237] Young, 371, emphasis added.
[2238] Just as the moral dimension of stories lies not in prescriptive content but in the capacities cultivated by the encounter with their aesthetic form, the power of hypnotic narratives lies in their ability to show rather than tell. Indeed, on the therapeutic level, refraining from imposing narratives onto the client, engaging in attentive listening and indirect communication similarly count as a moral act.
[2239] In this way, literature and hypnosis are preserved from accusations of encouraging moral corruption.
[2240] Hämäläinen, 28.

> appreciation in the imagination of predicaments and perplexities must be essential to moral reasoning. Novels … (frequently) do something for us that must be done if we are to gain any moral knowledge.[2241]

An ethics of the projective imagination emphasizes the moral value of this "sensitive appreciation" by revealing how "perplexities" can be explored imaginatively and concretely, as well as affectively, rather than merely argumentatively. Furthermore, it situates the very possibility of becoming-other as a central aesthetic-ethical perplexity, which deserves to be explored in practice, as in hypnosis, in addition to its theoretical, philosophical examination.

It is therefore in the "hypnotic" re-centering—or ek-statis—created by the projective imagination that aesthetic absorption and the ethical level come together in the novel.[2242] As Benson notes, the "surrender" involved in reading fiction allows one to:

> imagine and be helped to imagine what it is like being a different type of organizing centre within fields of experience which are different from those of which I have direct personal knowledge or acquaintance. By having my context of experience changed, and my intentionality or thought-content determined for me… if only for relatively short durations during a process of reading or viewing, 'I' can be changed.[2243]

As I have argued, both the novelistic text and hypnotic discourse are means to "help us" achieve this specific kind of change. Although the effect of absorption is temporary, its ethical impact on the recipient can carry on once the fictional experience comes to a close, and manifest itself as do the therapeutic benefits of fictional narratives, by cultivating the forms of attention which are conducive to the good life.

Conclusion

[2241] Putnam, "Literature, Science, Reflection," 89. Putnam does not restrict this claim to the novel but includes other literary genres. Arguing that reading about the lives of fictional characters may teach us something about our own implies that we do not consider the gap between their "world" and ours as unbridgeable. In this sense, one of the stakes of this chapter was to examine how "the problem of the relation between novelistic and real world is related to the problem of the character's vs. our own life." Ong, 155.

[2242] Emphasis on the importance of absorption for the ethical power of literature is an important part of my claim. See for example: "A novel… is the sensual experience of another world. If you don't enter that world, … you won't be able to empathize." Azar Nafizi, Reading Lolita in Tehran (New York: Random, 2003), 111; "It is when readers become imaginatively 'caught up in' the fiction that it best allows them to explore and reassess their values." Novitz, 356. Conversely, one can also argue that "the deepening of our moral understanding and emotions may contribute dramatically to our intense absorption in a narrative… the moral defects and/or merits of a work may figure in the aesthetic evaluation of the work." Noël Carroll, "Moderate Moralism," in *Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Literature,* 410. In this way, aesthetics and ethics can mutually feed each other and deepen each other's impact, develop each other's possibilities, coexisting as aspects of the text as a whole.

[2243] Benson, 162. Benson argues that this ability to occupy perspectives of others is actually at the heart of the constitution of self: the "very sociality that enables the emergence of selves as centers of psychological life in the first place." Ibid., 143.

In this chapter, I began by underlining the narrative dimension of hypnosis, suggesting that unlike what is often thought, it can be conceived as belonging to the 'narrative oriented' therapies described by Lewis in *Narrative Psychiatry*. Against conceptions that reduce the hypnotic experience to a mere dramatic-mimetic reliving of traumatic memories, my goal was to call attention to the numerous, other uses that can be made of hypnotic regression and futurization, beyond the recovery of traumatic material. As I suggested, these can be conceived as complex forms of storytelling, and, as they are intimately linked to narrative modes of looking at and being in the world, share important similarities with literary narratives, despite what initially seems to be the case.

Hypnotic restorying, however, differs from more cognitively oriented and insight-based forms of therapy, as it creates immersive, affectively and imaginatively engaging narratives—as do novels. This immersion is made possible by the induction of hypnotic trance, which plays a role similar to the opening of a novel, where the subject agrees to temporarily suspend their ordinary relation to the world and crosses an imaginary threshold, opening up to new modes of picturing, understanding, believing, conceiving, relating, and so on. In addition to the active engagement that they encourage, the specific ethical and therapeutic potential of hypnotic and novelistic narratives also stems from the awareness of the fictionality and irreducible aesthetic distance at the heart of both forms of storytelling. Far from being a loss of self, hypnosis as aesthetic activity participates in enriching the experiential and imaginary activity of the individual.

By using ethical criticism to illuminate the nature of novelistic-hypnotic narration, my purpose in this work was also to show that the immersive restorying and projective imagining found in both activities encourages ethically valuable forms of being in the world.[2244] In "immersive restorying," the individual is opened up to alternative, more "realistic" internal narratives, as described in Murdoch's theory of the moral attention, and uses the imaginary, the vicarious and the virtual as preparation for actual life. In both novels and hypnotherapy, fictionality opens up ordinarily inaccessible realms—of the past, of the future, of the minds of others—and makes-visible new alternatives, which lie at the heart of the present as imaginative possibilities. In

[2244] Indeed, as the exploration of our interiority and evaluative worldviews is a moral activity in itself, our ethics of immersive restorying and projective imagination underlines the inseparable dimension of aesthetics and ethics. Both come into play in narratively oriented therapeutic models such as modern hypnotherapy, where "the new life-narrative, the problem-narrative and the therapy-narrative develop jointly and are inseparable in the therapeutic context." Omer and Alon, 75.

"projective imagining," the individual actively engages in a process of temporarily becoming-other, which not only leads to increased and embodied moral understanding of other perspectives, but also to enriched modes of self-narration, which can be used in the actual world, when the book is closed or when the therapeutic session ends.

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By sketching out this double ethics of temporarily becoming-other, centered on the attention and the imagination, I thus attempted to offer a reparative—rather than suspicious—conception of what stories, and thus literature, can "do" in the world.

As Perry and Doan inquire in *Story Re-visions,* "if narrative is intrinsically the language of therapy, is there yet hope in the power of narrative, when it lacks authority, to lift people's lives and bring them together again?"[2245] By proposing an affirmative reply to this question, I also hope to have offered a response to the disillusioned skepticism dramatized in certain passages of Coetzee's texts. By underlining the transformative power of hypnotic-novelistic narration, I side with Arabella Kurtz's emphasis on the importance of narrative truth, as she reminds Coetzee that "stories are all we have to work with," an affirmation that need not be interpreted in a pessimistic manner.[2246]

From this examination of the ethical value of fictional narratives, I also hope to have produced an enriched conception of the therapeutic efficacy of hypnosis. As I suggested throughout these chapters, rather than merely induce automatic behavior, hypnosis taps into the creative and transformative potential of stories in order to bring about therapeutic change. It does so by *freeing* the subject from their ordinary automatisms—the "trance" of the everyday—and the limiting narratives which compose it. After underlining the parallels between hypnosis and the act of reading, I can now conclude that hypnosis allows the subject to take on what might be considered as an aesthetic attitude towards life. Indeed, it leads the individual to become temporally removed from ordinary life, in order to creatively re-examine, re-imagine, and thus, transform it. Like "good" art, hypnosis invites and enables us to willfully open up to the "other," not in a relation of submissiveness, but in order to draw out new potentialities—to produce

[2245] Parry and Doan, 26.
[2246] Kurtz, *The Good Story,* 63.

reframings and re-visions—sowing the seeds of their actualization in the imagination, rather than uncovering a single, predetermined, "truth."[2247] In hypnotherapy, one is not *searching* for the right interpretation, but letting oneself be modified by alternative modes of description, as is the case in novel reading.

As Iser already underlined, like the hypnotic subject, the reader "must transcend that world, in order to be able to observe it from outside. And herein lies the true communicatory function of literature."[2248] If art enables us to "transcend that which we are otherwise so inextricably entangled in—our own lives in the midst of the real world," then so does hypnotic discourse in the therapeutic setting.[2249] Both novels and hypnosis, in this sense, offer a therapeutics of *making visible* through re-vision.[2250] In the therapeutic setting, even when re-telling one's story is not a *sufficient* condition for change, it remains a *necessary* one. Indeed, purely behavioral, external modifications, devoid both of affective engagement and significant change in "vision" or understanding, are less likely to be durably implemented than an internal—*felt* and internally narrated—change.

Hypnotic immersion and suggestibility are thus therapeutically valuable when they occur in the context of a relation of trust, where the operator guides the subject toward a chosen direction, and the subject relinquishes a sense of self that no longer participate in the good life, as well as the—limiting and solidifying—narratives which accompany and uphold it.

As I suggested in Chapter 1, a study of the therapeutic value of hypnosis also reveals the suggestive nature at the heart of all therapeutic relations. As it is practiced today, not only does hypnosis acknowledge, it also incorporates this fact into its therapeutic strategies. As Omer and Alon put it, "we must influence, but our influence will only be therapeutic if we learn to mold it to the client's experience. …We are thus very active narrators, but we narrate most therapeutically when we are most guided by our clients' promptings."[2251] Hypnosis in the extensive sense thus

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[2247] Therapeutic change involves inserting a gap, a moment of openness, of undetermined potentiality which allows for the redirection and modification of the individual's habitual story. In other words, without *suggestibility,* no modification can take place. In this sense all narrative approaches to therapy are "hypnotic" in that they take the patient out of one habitual "trance" and open them up to alternative, more creative or fitting alternatives. Hypnosis thus makes visible and capitalizes on the positive effects of suggestibility, and on the inevitability of *influence* in the therapeutic—and generally, communicative—relation. As Omer and Alon put it, "in influencing our clients' construction of personal narratives our task is precisely to search for a form of persuasion that participates most profoundly in the client's truth." Ibid., 4.

[2248] Iser, *The Act of Reading,* 230.

[2249] Ibid., 230.

[2250] "As one learns to see existing phenomena—even one's own constituted meanings—they undergo a change, as observation adds a new dimension to the observed and thus begins to transform it." Ibid., 230.

[2251] Omer and Alon, 4.

reveals how the "suggestive" permeate all levels of interaction and fields of human inquiry and is a valuable, rather than merely deceiving, transformative tool.[2252] Like stories—and language in general—the dangers of hypnotism lie in its misuse rather than in its nature.[2253]

In my examination of the therapeutic and poetic value of indirect, permissive hypnosis, as opposed to the traditional and authoritative techniques of direct suggestion, I reemphasized the importance of narrative in the pursuit of the good life, and thereby, the implicit claim for a greater value (both aesthetic and ethical) of indirect—evocative, metaphorical, particularistic, imaginative and affective—communication, over the "dryness" of abstract, theoretical thought.

My analogy between hypnosis and the act of reading thus allowed for the emergence of a second parallel: hypnosis diverges from cognitive or behavioral therapeutic models in a way similar to how novelistic and literary texts differ from philosophical or theoretical discourse and the essay form. Since hypnotic, novelistic and moral particularistic discourse all value paying close attention to the formal and stylistic dimensions of linguistic expression, rather than mere content, they all participate in rehabilitating the absorptive, aesthetic power of *poiesis* as potentially educative and transformative, and the value of aesthetic description over non-aesthetic forms of discourse. The nodal link between ethics, novelistic texts and therapeutics that emerges from this study thus lies in the value of the specifically *aesthetic* properties of fictional narration. Conversely, modern hypnosis can also help remind literary critics that the "teachings" we receive from fictional narratives lie less in what they say, than in what we do as we receive them.

[2252] My analysis placed special emphasis on the "ethical" dimension of art, the "narrative" dimension of hypnosis, the "internal" dimension of our moral lives. This strongly *aspectival* dimension involved selecting certain elements and setting others aside, such as the aesthetic autonomy of art, the dramatic dimension of hypnosis, the rational and behavioral components of moral action, the general dimension of moral concepts, etc. This, however, need not be problematic. Indeed, as Felski notes about novelistic subjectivity, the limited nature of perspective is not necessarily an obstacle to "knowing": "Once we relinquish the false picture of a reality "out there" waiting to be found, we can think of literary conventions as devices for articulating truth rather than as obstacles to its discovery." Felski, *Uses,* 84. Similarly, Perry and Doan note about the therapeutic context that "A therapy equal to the postmodern challenges we have described will have to forsake the temptation of taking the last remaining vestiges of an 'objective' or 'neutral' position that assumes there is still someplace of firm ground upon which to stand." Parry and Doan, 22.

[2253] As Arthur Frank beautifully puts it, "those who seek to banish stories because of their dangers will never know that reenchantment is possible." Frank, 54.

Appendix A.

(Im)Possible Reconciliations? Bringing Hypnosis and Psychoanalysis Together.

As we showed in Chapter 1, psychoanalysis was born out of the Freudian rejection of hypnosis. Modern, indirect and permissive forms hypnotherapy which then developed in the second half of the twentieth century, did so in part against the psychoanalytic model. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that a strong opposition between analysis and hypnosis is inevitable. In this appendix, I will examine various ways in which hypnosis, as a clinical or therapeutic tool, might be compatible with psychoanalytic theory. To do so, I will discuss several attempts at reconciliation made during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in order to show the further ways in which hypnosis can be said to have survived the Freudian deathblow. In this way, I follow Borch-Jacobsen's argument according to which the prehistory of psychoanalysis "belongs to a certain future of psychoanalysis, rather to a long-dead past," albeit in a reconciliatory mindset.[2254] Indeed, rather than pitting fields against one another, this "(im)possible reconciliation" requires drawing out possible intersections, which are facilitated by the theoretical flexibility obtained once hypnosis is regarded as a tool which can be transposed across theoretical models, rather than an isolated practice or a rigid set of principles or doctrines. As I hope to show, there are several manners in which psychoanalysis and hypnosis can be thought to intersect or overlap despite their apparent opposition. As we will see in what follows, while some pull more toward the analytic pole, others pull more toward the hypnotic-suggestive; and while some occur on the level of meta-theoretical framework, others do on the clinical and technical levels of therapeutic practice.

1. The Narrative Turn in Psychoanalysis.

[2254] Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 44.

First of all, once hypnosis is conceived as a complex form of storytelling or narration—as I argued in Chapter 4—it can be brought together with psychoanalysis, under a common umbrella, often referred to as the "narrative turn" in psychotherapy.[2255] Indeed, once both hypnotic and analytic theory or concepts are conceived as narrative in essence, they can be integrated into the meta-narrative framework which considers all forms of psychotherapeutic theory as forms of complex, suggestive storytelling. The main interest of narrative approaches in psychoanalysis for us here is the way in which they influenced a discipline whose primary aim is to uncover hidden stories, and reveals the narrative structures at the heart of therapeutic processes.

First of all, historians and critics have observed the importance of narrative in Freudian psychoanalysis. James Philips for instance writes that "narrative and narrative identity have been present in psychoanalysis from the beginning."[2256] In *Reading for the Plot,* Peter Brooks writes that in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*—his "masterplot"—Freud also "lays out a total scheme of how life proceeds from beginning to end, and … confronts the question of whether the closure of an individual life is contingent or necessary," which is to say, examines "the very possibility of talking about life—about its very "narratability."[2257] Nevertheless, positions regarding the role that Freud gave to narrative in his theorization of the analytic model diverge. For instance, on the one hand, Lewis objects to the idea of Freud being the first narrativist. For him, Freud "never embraced a narrative theory of psychoanalysis. He remained manifestly attached throughout his career to the more science-like models he inherited from neuropathologists."[2258] And indeed, in his Studies on hysteria, Freud himself indicates that "like other neuropathologists, I was trained to employ local diagnosis and electro-prognosis, and it still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science."[2259] Other historians have pointed out that although Freud's narrative insights

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[2255] See Appendix B.

[2256] James Phillips, "The Psychodynamic Narrative," in *Healing Stories: Narrative in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy,* ed. G. Roberts and J. Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28.

[2257] Brooks, *Reading for the Plot,* 96-97.

[2258] Bradley Lewis, *Narrative Psychiatry,* 33.

[2259] Sigmund Freud, Case of Frälein Elisabeth von R, in "Case Histories from Studies on Hysteria," (1893) in *SE,* 2:160. This affirmation, Mark Micale takes to be a way of "alerting his readers" to the literary aspects of his medical case histories. Micale, 5. Indeed, Freud's remark can also be taken to establish the proximity between hysteria and literature, and the need to turn to literary prose to seize the specificity of the hysterical psyche, in the absence of a proper (psychoanalytic) theory. As Freud continues: "I must console myself with the reflection that *the nature of the subject* is evidently responsible for this," since with hysteria "local diagnosis and electrical reactions read nowhere… whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as *we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers* enables…. To at least obtain some kind of insight." Ibid., 160-161, emphasis added.

were a key part of his early work, they were "not valued or respected."[2260] Lewis even argue that they were "repressed by Freud and a by century of struggle over specific psychotherapy models."[2261]

On the other hand, Perry and Doan for instance argue that "Freud must be counted as the first narrative therapist," having created "a new literary genre, the case history."[2262] Graham Frankland describes psychoanalysis as a "'science' which simply cannot be properly understood or appreciated without reference to its creator's literary culture."[2263]

In this section we will give a short overview of how the narrative approach came into play in psychoanalysis and how narrative can be considered to be integral, in a discipline which was born out of the rejection of the hypnotic, "magical" narrative for its lack of scientific rigor. This will allow us to then underline a possible common narrative approach shared by analysis and hypnosis alike.

Analytic Storytelling

In what sense can psychoanalysis be thought of as a narrative practice?

[2260] Lewis, Ibid., 33.

[2261] Ibid. As we have seen, for Lewis "This repression of narrative has started to thaw in recent times, allowing the return of narrative as a central concern for contemporary psychotherapy." Ibid

[2262] Parry and Doan, *Story Re-visions. Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World,* 8. The metaphor seems to be used quite loosely, as Parry and Doan go on to add that Freud gave voice to his patients, who "were no longer compelled to live as supporting characters in stories that had gone forward at their expense." Ibid. 8 Similarly, as psychoanalysts Almond and Almond have noted in *The Therapeutic narrative,* (1996), analytic cure is comparable to the creative process of story production: "In treatment, a patient gradually learns to understand the factors that lead to concealment and inhibition. As these tensions become modified, the patient produces a more honest and revealing story with the therapist." Almond and Almond, *The Therapeutic Narrative. Fictional Relationships and the Process of Psychological Change*, 170.

[2263] Graham Frankland, *Freud's Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000),2. For the relations between psychoanalysis and the Humanities, see Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of our Culture* and *The Liberal Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961). For postmodernist readings of Freud in relation to literature, see Jacques Lacan, "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious," *Yale French Studies* 36-37 (1966): 112-147; Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference,* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1978); Harold Bloom, "Freud and the Poetic Sublime" *Poetics of influence: new and selected criticism* (New Haven: H.R. Schwab, 1988); Geoffrey Hartman "The Interpreter's Freud," in *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004). See also Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Joseph Smith, *The Literary Freud: Mechanisms of Defense and the Poetic Will* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Shoshana Felman (ed.), *Literature and Psychoanalysis. The Question of Reading: Otherwise* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

The first, most evident way in which narrative is present in psychoanalysis is by considering the talking cure—in which "a patient's tales might provide etiological clues and even possess salutary power"—as a means for the analysand to "tell their story."[2264] In this first, somewhat evident sense, analysis is the process of giving voice to the analysand, letting them become the narrator of their own life, allowing them to "reproduce the story of her illness," while the analyst acts as a mere recipient.[2265] As Brooks has argued, "in the course of his use of the genre [of the case history], Freud encountered all the problems of narrative design and exposition faced by biographers, historians and novelists, and the issues of fictionality that have haunted literature since Plato."[2266] Case histories are in this sense bound by similar narrative constraints as literary genres, and therefore face the same difficulties as novel writing would. Indeed, with the mass of material which Freud obtained from the analysand—of "what Freud unpacked"—"the shape of the individual and his biography become uncontrollable."[2267] Out of the narrated historical material, a second, more reliable narrative must be formed.[2268]

Indeed, in a second sense, the "narrative" dimension of psychoanalysis can refer to the act of interpretation, by the analyst, of the analysand's discourse, which involves a symptomatic mode of reading.[2269] For example, as Freud wrote about Emmy Von. N., "I cannot evade listening to her stories in every detail to the very end."[2270] However, "her remarkably well-stocked memory showed the most striking gaps. She herself complained that it was a though her life was chopped in pieces."[2271] The analyst must therefore help produce a reconstruction of the story, filling in the gaps, identifying the hidden, latent story under the manifest narrative told by the analysand.[2272]

[2264] Thrailkill, *Affecting Fictions,* 123; 183.
[2265] Similarly, hysterical symptoms are "talked away." Joseph Breuer, Case of Fräulein Anna O, in "Case Histories from Studies on Hysteria," *SE:* 2:37.
[2266] Brooks, *Reading for the Plot,* 284.
[2267] Ibid., 278.
[2268] However, "not only must the analyst reinterpret, reorganize, and re-evaluate what the patient has already re-presented but, like any reader of literary narrative, he can hope to recover only a primary narrative which is discontinuous and full of holes." Riley, 2005, 97.
[2269] See Ricoeur's notion of "hermeneutics of suspicion." Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy,* 27 and Frederic Jameson: "a 'diagnostic' form of criticism treats literature like a symptomatic body. Like a psychoanalytic subject, the text harbors clues (a manifest content) that lead to the latent, "ideological system" on which it is structured, which "remains unrealized in the surface of the text." Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 48.
[2270] Freud, "Studies on Hysteria," *SE* 2:61.
[2271] Ibid., 67.
[2272] Indeed, in the therapeutic setting, a patient's body can "fill the 'gap' in the tale," showing with gestures what is omitted in words. Thrailkill, 123.

This may involve having to inverse the ordinary relation between truth and fictive appearances. As Frederik Crews notes for example:

> Whereas psychoanalytic theory relies on a horizon of truthfulness, psychoanalytic praxis relies around an alert attention to the problematic fictiveness of the analysand's truth (intentional statements, recovered memories) and the probable truthfulness of his or her fictions (performative acting-out, symbolic transferences). The manifest, apparent story or truth sometimes is only a communication about a hidden, more interesting truth … a 'no' may mean a 'yes' and a 'yes' almost certainly does not mean this particular 'yes'.[2273]

In this sense, the analyst must "reauthor" the analysand's untrustworthy narrative, and produce not only a coherent but also an insightful, interpreted, story from the initial material, which inescapably involves selecting and reorganizing. Indeed, as Roy Schafer argues, in the analytic cure, the analysand is considered as an "unreliable narrator" of sorts, in respect to his or her consciously constructed account.[2274] In the analyst's retelling of the analysand's story, "certain features are accentuated while others are placed in parentheses, connected to others, or developed further."[2275] Consequently, by introducing new, "though often contested or resisted questions that amount to regulated narrative possibilities," the analyst's retellings progressively influence "the what and how" of the stories told by analysands, which then creates a cluster of "more or less coordinated new narrations," or in other words, a "jointly authored work."[2276] In a sense, the analysand's story is never good enough: "links are missing, chronologies twisted, and the objects of desire are misnamed."[2277] This is because, as Janet Malcolm puts it, "it isn't the story [the patient] tries to tell but the story he tells *in spite of himself* that the analyst listens for. What he is really after is the

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[2273] Frederick Crews, in A. Wolloch and P. Brooks, eds., *Whose Freud? The Place of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 293. As Jonathan Lear notes in "Truth in Psychoanalysis," the opposite temptation is that of creating a narrative that fits too well with that of the analysand: "The problem is how to avoid collaborating with the analysand in making things fit together too well. For there is a temptation to enter into a narcissistic collaboration in which both analyst and analysand implicitly congratulate each other on doing a good job…As Aristotle recognized, stories tend to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; as Nietzsche recognized, lives often do not. In facilitating the construction of a convincing life narrative, one may well be collaborating in the construction of a false self." Lear, in *Whose Freud?* 306-307. [hypnosis escapes this problem because in a way truth is irrelevant: we work with emotional release and interpretations, not truth]. "Perhaps the core conception of truth in psychoanalysis should not be thought of as primarily directed toward contents but rather should be understood as a particular type of mental activity. Truth is a way of living with contents. I should like to suggest that within psychoanalysis, truth should be understood as a certain way of developing fantasy." In analysis, truth is "*a certain kind* of elaboration of fantasy" which we could call "relatively nondefensive" … "in analysis, truth is free association." Lear, Ibid, 307-308.

[2274] Roy Schafer, "Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue." *Critical Inquiry* 7, 1 (1980): 43.

[2275] Schafer, Ibid., 35.

[2276] Ibid., 36.

[2277] Brooks, *Reading for the Plot,* 227.

story behind the story."[2278] As Schafer notes, in analytic listening, the telling itself is treated as "an object of description" rather than, "as the analysand wishes, an indifferent or transparent medium for imparting information or thematic content."[2279] In this sense, *unreliability itself* is interpreted and "woven into the dialogue as an aspect of resistance."[2280]

Analysis thus involves retelling the patient's incomplete, distorted, or chaotic story, and transforming it—or filtering it through—analytic interpretation. For example, the Freudian analyst:

> progressively organizes this retelling around bodily zones, modes, and substances, particularly the mouth, anus, and genitalia; and in conjunction with these zones, the modes of swallowing and spitting out, retaining and expelling, intruding and enclosing, and the concrete conceptions of words, feelings, ideas, and events as food, feces, urine, semen, babies, and so on. All of these constituents are given roles in the infantile drama of family life, a drama that is organized around births, losses, illnesses, abuse and neglect, the parents' real and imagined conflicts and sexuality, gender differences, sibling relations, and so on.[2281]

This retelling is a process of form-giving which is comparable to other literary and narrative activities.[2282] However, this "suspicious" mode of reading is the aspect of analytic interpretation which has been criticized for imposing authoritative narratives onto the patient's initial material. For Parry and Doan for example, psychoanalysis became a new means of authoritative meaning-making in a disenchanted modern world:

> What Freud gave away with one hand he took back with the other… the therapist became the expert on each client—the one a person went to when the emptied self of modernity's pace became unbearably anxious because it no longer belonged to any meaning-lending story and had no story of its own.[2283]

In this context, analytic narration risk taking *away* the subject's voice by striving to liberate them *via* the talking cure.

The Use of Stories for Their Therapeutic Value

[2278] Janet Malcolm, "Six Roses ou Cirrhose?" in *The Purloined Clinic: Selected Writings* (New York: Random House, 1992), 46.
[2279] Schafer, Ibid, 43.
[2280] Ibid.
[2281] Ibid., 40.
[2282] About the synthesizing work involved in the case of the Wolf Man, Freud notes: "This task, which is not difficult in other respects, finds a natural limit when it is a question of forcing a structure which is itself in many dimensions onto the two-dimensional plane." Freud, "History of an Infantile Neurosis," *SE,* 17:72.
[2283] Parry and Doan, 8.

A second way in which narrative is involved in psychoanalysis is in making explicit use of stories or myths for their therapeutic value.[2284] Indeed, as Micale points out, in creating psychoanalysis, Freud "drew key ideas and terms—catharsis, cathexis, the Oedipus Complex, narcissism—from Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians as well as from contemporary novels, such as Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva* (1903) and Carl Spitteler's *Imago* (1906)."[2285] From the Freudian model onwards, literary myths were then used to explain analytic material and psychopathology on a theoretical level.

Furthermore, the therapeutic value of stories in the analytic context can also be underlined in reverse, in the way in which narratives directly impact the human psyche by giving form to unconscious fantasies. A good example of this process is *Uses of Enchantment,* in which Bruno Bettelheim brought Freudian readings of fairy tales to the general public, underlining the value of these tales which make fantasies tolerable to the psychic apparatus of children.[2286]

Indeed, for Bettelheim, fairy tales are beneficial to children as they help them "cope with the psychological problems of growing up and integrating their personalities."[2287] Fairy tales function much like dreams, providing similar benefits by disguising and fulfilling unconscious wishes: "as we awake refreshed from our dreams, better able to meet the tasks of reality, so the fairy story ends with the hero returning, or being returned to the real world, much better able to master life."[2288] Faire tales offer figures onto which the child can project, or "externalize what goes on in his mind."[2289] Furthermore, the tale is especially suited to infantile modes of being in the

[2284] See also Norman Holland, *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968) for whom core unconscious fantasies are made manageable through literary disguise—and in other forms such as film, theater, etc.—which explains the appeal it has for us.
[2285] Micale, *The Mind of Modernism*, 5. Micale also points out that later in Freud's life, the city of Frankfurt awarded him the Goethe prize, for his German prose writing, whereas a Nobel Prize in medical science and physiology eluded him.
[2286] Dundes argues that Bettelheim in fact omitted (or borrowed without acknowledging) previous key analytic writing on folklore, such as Franz Ricklin's *Wishfulfillment and Symbolism in Fairy Tales* (1908), Julius E. Heuscher's *A Psychiatric Study of Fairy Tales: Their Origin, Meaning and Usefulness* (1963), or "the many essays by Géza Róheim, perhaps the only psychoanalyst who began his career as a folklorist." See Alan Dundes, "Bruno Bettelheim's *Uses of Enchantment* and Abuses of Scholarship," *The Journal of American Folklore* 104, no. 411 (Winter, 1991): 76.
[2287] Bettelheim, 14.
[2288] Bettelheim, 64. For Bettelheim, fairy tales are in this sense more useful than myths, because they have their heroes "return to normal" after using potential supernatural powers to resolve the crisis: the return to the ordinary is important to meet the child on their own level rather than represent an exceptional or extra-ordinary character.
[2289] Ibid., 122. For example, "the wolf is a projection of the child's badness" and the story tells how this can be "dealt with constructively." Ibid., 44. Fairy tales also teach about the difference between the pleasure and reality principles, about fairness and injustice, depending on who gets punished, etc.

world, filling "the gaps in a child's understanding … caused by the immaturity of his thinking."[2290] According to Bettelheim, depriving the child of fairy tales will lead to "an impoverishment of his creative faculties, to his inability to invent stories on his own, which help him cope with life's problems."[2291] This is significant for our purposes, as it indicates the important role played by fictional narratives in establishing a solid relation between the individual and the actual world, which is also posited in the hypnotherapeutic use of fictional stories. According to Bettelheim, fairy tales will "get a point across or give comfort" in a much more appropriate manner than "adult reasoning and viewpoints."[2292] Indeed, their pedagogical power lies in showing rather than telling, while encouraging autonomy and helping the child to find solutions within his own resources—which is also a strong presupposition found in Ericksonian models of hypnotherapy.[2293] As a specific kind of literary discourse, fairy tales—like hypnotic narratives and dreams—function in an indirect and suggestive, rather than explicit manner, and leave to the child's the task of "fantasizing whether and how to apply to himself what the story reveals about life and human nature."[2294] The tale directs the child's thinking "without ever telling what it ought to be," a process which in itself "makes for true maturing."[2295] On the other hand, "telling the child what to do just replaces the bondage of his own immaturity with a bondage of servitude to the dicta of adults."[2296] Like hypnotherapy, fairy tales thus allow for the playing out of fantasies *outside* of intellectual awareness, "without the child being consciously aware of the fact."[2297] For Bettelheim, one should indeed "let the fairy tale speak to his unconscious, give body to his unconscious anxieties… *without this ever coming to conscious awareness.*"[2298] For him, this is because a child who is made aware of what the figures in fairy tales stand for in his own psychology will not be able to tolerate the anxiety of having the fantasies become conscious: he will be "robbed of a much needed outlet,

[2290] Ibid., 61. Our contention is that on the contrary, one need not be a child to benefit from the power of stories, and the development of fantasy does not correspond to a lack of understanding, but rather a creative capacity.
[2291] 122.
[2292] Ibid., 55. This argument is similar to the one in favor of novelistic form, rather than abstract philosophical, essay, or journalistic prose, as well as that of the—hypnotic—imagination as a more efficient tool to convey therapeutic messages than conscious volition or intellectual understanding.
[2293] As Schafer notes, "there is no hard-and-fast line between telling and showing, either in literary narrative or in psychoanalysis, the competent psychoanalyst deals with telling as a form of showing and with showing as a form of telling. Everything in analysis is both communication and demonstration." Schafer, 37.
[2294] Bettelheim, 45.
[2295] Ibid.
[2296] Ibid.
[2297] Dundes, 75. Whereas "the answers given by myths are definite, while the fairy tale is suggestive." Bettelheim, 45.
[2298] Bettelheim, 15, emphasis added.

and devastated by having to realize the desires, anxieties and vengeful feelings that are ravaging him."[2299] Therefore, both the enchantment and the therapeutic or pedagogical goals of the fairy tale will be "destroyed" if their meaning is made explicit.[2300] Bettelheim's argument in this sense echoes those of the contemporary moral philosophers who underline the importance of literary narratives over theoretical arguments, and of hypnotherapists who stress the importance of engaging unconscious affective processes in addition to cognitive components of the therapeutic process. For Bettelheim, the advantage of the fairy tale is also linked to its *form,*[2301] which unlike the dream has "a consistent structure with a definite beginning and a plot that moves toward a satisfying solution which is reached at the end," and fits into our argument about the therapeutic value of fictional narratives made in Chapter 4.[2302]

Analytic Theory as Narrative

Thirdly, one can underline, not the explicit but rather, the *implicit* presence of narrative in analytic theory. Roy Schafer's narrative approach to psychoanalysis clearly illustrates this position, by arguing that "it makes sense, and it may be a useful project, to present psychoanalysis in narrational terms."[2303]

As we indicated higher up, in "Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue" (1980), Schafer argues that analytic interpretation is a form of "*retelling"* of the patient's story "along psychoanalytic lines."[2304] In doing so, he then asks how, "in the post-positivist scheme of things," we are to understand the "validity" of analytic interpretation.[2305] Indeed, one of Schafer's main points in this text is that all narratives are incomplete. A narrative can merely seize a single aspect of reality and "necessarily limits one to constructing some version or some vision of the subject in the world."[2306] This is why methodologically, analysis should start with the analysand's *response*

[2299] Ibid., 57.
[2300] This is why one must "never explain to the child the meaning of fairy tales," and even discourage the presence of illustrations in fairy tale books, which impose "unnecessary and detrimental" restrictions on the child's pictorial imagination. Ibid, 155.
[2301] Which is the same as that of the hypnotic session.
[2302] Bettelheim, 57.
[2303] Schafer, 30.
[2304] Ibid., 30.
[2305] Ibid, 37. For him the concept of validity must replace that of truth, and "can only be achieved within a system that is viewed as such and that appears, after careful consideration, to have the virtues of coherence, consistency, comprehensiveness, and common sense." Ibid., 50.
[2306] Ibid., 49.

to the analyst's retelling, to the "narrative transformation" of the initial discourse. For Schafer it is on the narration of this "moment of dialogue" that analytic inquiry should center. Indeed, the patient's "life-history" forms a second-order history compared to the analytic "dialogue," which forms a present account of the transference and resistance:

> It is from this beginning that the accounts of early infantile development are constructed. Those traditional developmental accounts… may now be seen in a new light: less as positivistic sets of factual findings about mental development and more as hermeneutically filled-in narrative structures … that … control the telling of the events of the analysis, including the many tellings and retellings of the analysand's life history. The time is always present. The event is always an ongoing dialogue.[2307]

Furthermore, for Schafer, multiple analytic "stories" can be told or derived from a single case. The primary narrative problem of the analyst is thus "not how to tell a normative chronological life history; rather, it is how to tell the several histories of each analysis."[2308] In other words, there is no such thing as an aboriginal body of evidence, or objective analytic "data."[2309] There is no single, necessary or definitive account "of a life history and psychopathology, of biological and social influences on personality, or of the psychoanalytic method and its results."[2310] This is why data must be "unfailingly regarded as constituted rather than simply encountered."[2311]

Analytic theory itself can thus be thought of as a collection of "narrative structures" which theorists use to explain human development.[2312] For instance, Schafer identifies the two primary narrative structures at the heart of Freudian metapsychology, which he refers to as the story of the "beast" on the one hand, and of the "machine" on the other.[2313] The first story "begins with the infant and young child as a beast, otherwise known as the id, and ends with the beast domesticated, tamed by frustration in the course of development in a civilization hostile to its nature."[2314]

[2307] Ibid., 52.

[2308] Ibid., For Schafer, Freud's major case studies follow this narrative form: "One has only to compare his notes on the case [of the Rat Man] with his official report on it to see what different tales he told and could have told about this man, that is, about his work with this man." Schafer, 52. See Freud, "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis," *SE*, 10:153-249.

[2309] Psychoanalytic theory must "accept the proposition that there are no objective, autonomous, or pure psychoanalytic data which, as Freud was fond of saying, compel one to draw certain conclusions." Ibid., 30

[2310] Ibid. The material and techniques of analysis are thus are inseparable from the investigator's "precritical and interrelated assumptions concerning the origins, coherence, totality, and intelligibility of personal action." Schafer, 30.

[2311] Schafer, 30.

[2312] Ibid, 29-30. This implies that the analytic investigator is not an invisible presence who can observe his object from the outside: "The sharp split between subject and object must be systematically rejected." Ibid., 30.

[2313] Ibid, 33.

[2314] Schafer specifics that the "filling in" of this narrative structure "*tells of a lifelong transition,*" the length of which reinforces the parallel between novelistic and "therapeutic" temporality, as opposed to other forms such as the short story, fairy tale, etc. Schafer, 30, emphasis added.

Although this story seems frightening,[2315] in the case of successful analysis it becomes a "tale of human development, suffering, defeat, and triumph."[2316] The second narrative structure, which describes the mental apparatus as a machine, is "based on Newtonian physics as transmitted through the physiological and neuroanatomical laboratories of the nineteenth century," and is just as deterministic as the first.[2317]

The same can be applied to the core concepts of psychoanalysis that act as an interpretative grid for the otherwise "formless" material presented for analysis:[2318] "transference and resistance themselves may be viewed as narrative structures" which "prescribe a point of view from which to tell about the events of analysis in a regulated and therefore coherent fashion."[2319] By underlining the narrative dimension of Freudian theory, Schafer thus emphasizes the limitations it imposes on the analysand's sense of freedom.[2320] As constructions, the interpretive concepts of psychoanalysis "must not be taken as the only possible means of understanding."[2321]

[2315] Thus "the beast pervades, empowers, or at least necessitates our most civilized achievements." Ibid, 31.

[2316] Ibid, 31. The qualification "story" is not necessarily pejorative. As Schafer specifies, in Freud's time, the story was "extraordinarily illuminating in its psychological content, scientifically respectable in its conceptualization and formalization, dramatically gripping in its metaphorical elaboration, and beneficial in his work with his patients." Ibid.

[2317] Ibid., 32. In this second narrative structure, "this machine is characterized by inertia; it does not work unless it is moved by force. It works as a closed system; that is, its amount of energy is fixed, with the result that storing or expending energy in one respect decreases the energy available for other operations: thus on purely quantitative grounds, love of others limits what is available for self-love, and love of the opposite sex limits what is available for love of the same sex. The machine has mechanisms, such as the automatically operating mechanisms of defense and various other checks and balances." Ibid., 32.

[2318] "Transference, far from being a time machine by which one may travel back to see what one has been made out of, is a clarification of certain constituents of one's present psychoanalytic actions. This clarification is achieved through the circular and coordinated study of past and present." Schafer, 36.

[2319] Ibid., 36.

[2320] The concept of self is thus inherently narrative: "the self is a telling" which varies in "the degree to which it is unified, stable, and acceptable to informed observers as reliable and valid." Furthermore, "we narrate others just as we narrate selves." Thus, layers upon layers of "telling" are built up": "We are forever telling stories about ourselves… In saying that we also tell them to *ourselves,* however, we are enclosing one story within another. This is the story that there is a self to tell something to, a someone else serving as audience who is oneself or one's self." Ibid., 35-36. Similarly, as J. M. Coetzee observes, "We can't remember what is was like to be a neonate… when we sympathetically inhabit our neonate selves, we are inhabiting a fiction… Klein's amount of neonate experience is a fiction. You happen to think that it is a true account, and I tend to agree. But it is nevertheless a fictional account, a story about what it is like to be a baby." Coetzee, *The Good Story*, 135. Therefore, "to imagine being Klein's infant is to "briefly, be such a baby," a proposition which ties novelistic and therapeutic subjectivity together via their similar imaginative qualities. Ibid., 135.

[2321] For instance: Freudian resistance can be "retold" as transference (positive or negative), as "a project of preservation, even enhancement, of self or analyst or both," as "something the analysand is [often unconsciously] doing rather than passively undergoing, etc. The "positivistic" conception conceives of reality as being either "'out there' or 'in there' in the inner world, existing as a knowable, certifiable essence. At least for the analytic observer, the subject and object are clearly distinct." Beyond Freudian and Kleinian descriptions of early development stages, today, "very early phases of infant development now include the phase of autism, symbiosis, and separation-individuation; the phase of basic trust and mistrust; the phase of pure narcissism, in which there are no objects which

Furthermore, whereas in the "traditional" transference narration, the analysand's life history is "static, archival, linear, reversible, and literally retrievable," according to Schafer, analytic temporality in this narrative context functions in a *spiraling,* rather than linear motion.[2322] In this spiraling temporality, similar events are retold from different viewpoints as the cure unfolds, and "each recollection builds on previous ones."[2323] What "returns" thus invariably differs with every iteration or remembrance.[2324] This is why Schafer argues that the "temporal circle" of analysis works *both* backward from the present (to "define, refine, correct, organize, and complete an analytically coherent and useful account of the past") and forward from the past (to "constitute that present and that anticipated future which are most important to explain").[2325] Significantly, stories about the self always serve a specific function: "We change many aspects of these histories of self and others as we change, for better or worse, the implied or stated questions to which they are the answers."[2326]

Without going as far as Schafer (who argues that "viewing psychoanalysis as a therapy itself manifests a narrative choice" that tells the story of "a doctor curing a patient"), narrative approaches to psychoanalysis can help underline its similarities with novelistic subjectivity, which are illuminated by the notion of "narrative truth," as opposed to "historical" truth.[2327] Indeed, Freud's revision of the seduction theory already established the notion that analysis is concerned with fantasy rather than historical truth, a crucial division which finds its modern counterpart in the divergence between "story-focused" and "life-focused" branches of psychotherapy.[2328] In

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are not primarily part of the self; the mirror phase; and variations on the Kleinian paranoid-schizoid and depressive phases or 'positions' of infancy." Ibid., 46; 48; 49; 51), etc.

[2322] Schafer, 36. See also: "in classical psychoanalysis the past is deemed to be connected to the present by a straight causal chain." Omer Alon, 215.

[2323] Omer and Alon, 126; 129.

[2324] Ibid., 126.

[2325] Schafer, 52. See "The Psychoanalytic Life History," in *Language and Insight* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 3-27.

[2326] Schafer, 35. "Personal development" may thus be characterized as a "change in the questions it is urgent or essential to answer." Ibid.

[2327] Schafer, 37. The very concept of "interpretation" is a story that "tells that each person is a container of experience fashioned by an independently operating mind and, that by the use of mental eyes located outside this container, the person may look in and see what is going on… The uncritical and pervasive use of this narrative form in daily life and in psychological theories shows how appealing it is to disclaim responsibility in this way." Ibid., 39-40. Psychoanalysis as therapy tells the story "from the standpoint of consciousness: consciously, but only consciously, the analysand presents his/her problems as alien interferences with the good life," which allows to "justify analysis on these highly defensive and conscious grounds of patienthood." Ibid., 37.

[2328] "Some analysts have veered in one direction and then the other, as when Freud first attributed his patients' narrations of childhood seductions as representing actual events, then treated these experiences as creations of

story-focused, or narrative oriented therapeutic models, historical truth is considered not only to be secondary in bringing about change, but also to remain ultimately inaccessible to therapeutic inquiry:[2329]

> There are two ways to approach the concept of truth in psychoanalysis, 'from the outside' and 'from the inside.' In working 'from the outside,' we bring a conception of truth, developed, say, in philosophy, to psychoanalysis as an object of study. Truth, then, is deployed as a *meta*theoretical concept or predicate, applied to the assertions of psychoanalysis, and allowing us to see the conditions under which those assertions are true. By contrast, when we are working 'from the inside,' we are concerned with how the issue of truth arises *within* the analytic situation. There is value in each approach, but it is important not to confuse them: for that is ultimately to confuse what is grist with what is mill.[2330]

Rather than import a correspondence theory of truth and impose it into a field which is concerned with a different, more subjective type of truth, the concept of *narrative truth,* as formulated in Donald Spence's description (1982), allows to bring together hypnotic, novelistic, and psychoanalytic insight, under a common category.[2331] As Omer and Alon describe it, narrative truth produces as a feeling in both analysand and analyst that "all elements of an account hang together," giving a sense of inevitability, similar to what a reader might experience while reading a mystery tale: "its major criteria are coherence, comprehensiveness, and parsimony. Thus an elegant interpretation, a detailed reconstruction of past events a well-rounded case history, may be said to possess narrative truth."[2332] In the Freudian model, this "good fit" *proved* the historical truth of the analytic reconstruction: "the guarantor of psychoanalytic reliability is the objectivity and neutrality of the … method. … The therapist's counterpart to the client's natural free association is the attitude of evenly hovering attention. … The meeting of these two neutral attitudes makes for the validity of psychoanalytic data."[2333] As Spence argues, however, because

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narrative process entailed in psychoanalysis." James Peacock and Dorothy Holland, "The Narrated Self: Life Stories in Process," *Ethos* 21, no. 4 (Dec. 1993): 371.

[2329] "'Story' is preferable to 'history' because it does not connote that the narration is true, that the events narrated necessarily happened, or that it matters whether they did or not." Ibid., 368.

[2330] Lear, "Truth in Psychoanalysis," 304.

[2331] See Donald Spence, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1982). Schafer's critique emerged around the same time as Spence's distinction between historical and narrative truth, which also suggests that the stories produced by analysis are reconstructions, which are "influenced by the beliefs and interests of the participants." Omer and Alon, 220.

[2332] Omer and Alon, 217. See also: "When an interpretation is truthful in psychoanalysis … emotional vividness, a sense of being alive, that this *really is* who one is starts to pour back into what now seems to have been an empty shell of living. This is what truth as correspondence or coherence misses: The interpretations may well be getting the facts of psychological or historical reality right (correspondence), they may well be forming a compelling narrative with which to understand one's life (coherence), but all of this can be done in a defensive, removed way—as though one were standing outside one's life trying to understand it. The concept of truth in psychoanalysis must be an expression of life itself, not an evasion of it." Lear, 310.

[2333] Omer and Alon, 218.

client and therapist alike "labor under constant pressure towards meaning," "neutral" free-association and hovering-attention are *de facto* impossible. Despite the original Freudian instructions, free association remains inevitably selective.[2334]

This focus on story rather than history is also a safeguard which corrects a potential risk run by hypnotherapists who are often accused of confusing both categories and naively ascribing historical truth to the material which comes up during the trance state. In this sense, hypnosis is often represented as having not yet completely abandoned its own seduction theory, with the problematic epistemological and ethical consequences that this implies. Even in the analytic setting however, as Lear shows, "buying in" to the subject's narrative can lead the therapist to become duped by their defenses, and become trapped in a "false" narrative which searches for historical truth as a means to evade reality, to avoid responsibility, or deflect away from difficult insight:[2335]

> Of course, I cannot say what did or did not happen to the person when he was an infant. But I do know that, in this case, the desire to find out the historical truth was the expression of a wish that something external to him would both legitimate and absolve him of his homosexuality. In effect, this analysand had invented his own seduction hypothesis and was using it for the same purpose that Freud used his. At its deepest, the seduction hypothesis is not about seduction *per se* but about the role reality is to play in psychological explanation. The seduction hypothesis treats the intrusion of external reality as an Archimedean point, an end-of-the-line of psychological explanation. … It tacitly assumes that historical truth is the one item within an analysis that is itself exempt from analysis. If the analyst were simply to go along with the search for historical reality or the attempt to recover a memory, he or she would in fact be collaborating with the analysand's defenses.[2336]

Thus, hypnotists and analysts alike, rather than concerning themselves with the truth of a (his)story, should "pay attention to what such a history *does,* within the context of the [therapy] as a whole, rather to only what it says."[2337] In other words, "fiction" can and should be put to therapeutic use.

Therefore, beyond the classic analogy between case history and story, there are two other ways in which narration intervenes in psychoanalysis, which in underlined in this section: the

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[2334] Indeed, not only do thoughts "move at a faster pace than words," the client often needs to interrupt the flow to provide contextual information, without which the whole material would be meaningless: "The more free the associations, the more is the therapist compelled to supply her own context (usually created by theoretical presuppositions) to make sense of the material. Even hovering attention is thus possible only when the client supplies enough context to make understanding possible that ism when he is not free associating." Ibid., 218-219.

[2335] "When the concept of truth emerges in the analytic situation it is as a resistance because if the analyst cannot find anything that the analysand can recognize as a distortion, there will be nothing to analyze… Because the analysand is so concerned with getting the facts right, he or she cannot see to what use he or she is putting this obsession …the concern for truth as correspondence to reality can serve as a massive obstacle to psychoanalytic understanding." Lear, 305.

[2336] Lear, 305.

[2337] Lear, 295.

explicit analytic *use* of stories or literary material on the one hand, and the narrative *conception* of analysis on the other. This latter dimension is what allows us to suggest that, regardless of theoretical schools, narrative structure can serve as a sort of "scaffolding for understanding the change process" in general, and can apply to psychoanalysis and hypnosis alike.

2. Hypnoanalysis

In Section 1 of this Appendix, I suggested that psychoanalysis and hypnosis are compatible on a theoretical level, provided we consider them under a common, "narrative" umbrella. In this section, I will shift from the theoretical to the clinical point of view, and examine dynamic uses of hypnotherapy which suggest that hypnosis, as a clinical tool, is not opposed to but on the contrary, can be compatible with, psychoanalytic theory. An especially telling example of this process is "hypnoanalysis," a theory and practice which appeared during the mid-twentieth century, in which hypnosis serves as an *adjunct* to analysis.[2338]

As Lewis Wolberg argues in *Hypnoanalysis* (1945) for instance, hypnosis can be used in an analytic framework, not in the use of direct suggestion as was the case with Bernheim, but by using the trance state itself as a catalyzer to access analytic material and produce insight. For him, the study of the patient's unconscious material under hypnosis, but also of their reactions to hypnotic inductions, to the trance state itself, and to the therapist, all "make excellent grist for the analytic mill."[2339]

In hypnoanalysis, hypnosis is used first and foremost to cut through the analysand's resistance and thus accelerate the cure:

> Hypnosis, properly applied, can shorten both phases of the therapeutic process [the uncovering and re-educating phases] … By cutting through interpersonal defenses, it plunges the patient into a close relationship with the analyst… In addition to its effect on transference resistances…. One can circumvent and more easily resolve ego defenses that keep unconscious material from gaining access to awareness.[2340]

[2338] See Lewis Wolberg, *Hypnoanalysis* (London: William Heinemann medical Books Ldt., 1946). As Erika Fromm and Michael Nash observe, Wolberg was "the first ego psychologically oriented analyst who wrote extensively on hypnoanalysis." Fromm and Nash, *Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis* (Madison CT: International Universities Press, 1997), 24.
[2339] Lewis Wolberg, *The Practice of Psychotherapy: 506 Questions and Answers* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1982), 116.
[2340] Wolberg, *Hypnoanalysis,* 162-163.

Indeed, although deep trance "is quite essential in attaining best results," transference manifestations are "precipitated by the mere induction of hypnosis, without regard to its depth."[2341] The ability to go into trance, even partially, will thus serve as analytic material: analytic interpretation can illuminate its inherent dynamics and use its driving principle for therapeutic aims.

In hypnoanalysis, hypnotic rapport also acts both as a catalyst and magnifying glass for transference dynamics to appear, and thus is especially suitable to analytic investigation:

> There is usually a response to the hypnotist with the full range of characteriologic defenses and demands… There is also a mobilization of hostile and erotic impulses … in fact hypnosis acts as a catalyst to the experiencing of the deepest and most dynamic transference feelings, for it brings the patient immediately into a close relationship that he might have succeeded in avoiding in the waking state.[2342]

Crucial, then, to the technique, is the analysis and working-through of the "hypnotic" transference. "The analysis refers not only to the transference attitudes and feelings that are a reaction to the analyst as a human being, but also to the very dependency strivings upon which the motive for being hypnotizable is based."[2343] According to Wolberg, interpreting these deep dependency strivings will avoid the development of an irrational positive transference, and "will prevent from maintaining the illusion that the analyst is a demigod whose edicts [the patient] must accept on the basis of faith."[2344] This is in part due to a certain degree of permissiveness on the part of the hypnoanalyst, to an absence of specific demands of compliance—unlike what was found in previous, authoritarian models of hypnosis. This permissive dimension can then be put to strategic, therapeutic use: "As soon as the patient understands that he is not expected to comply in any way, and realizes that his compliance is rooted in irrational inner feelings he will be less likely to falsify the material that he brings up."[2345] Significantly, Wolberg does not deny the risks inherent in the establishment of such a strong "hypnotic" transference, which can lead to illusory ego strength:

> Unfortunately, ego strength that results from the hypnotic transference per se must be held suspect. Based upon fusion relation with an overvalued magical personage, and imbedded in faith, it is wholly artificial. Once the hypnotic treatments are interrupted, the self is robbed of its illusory power. The more healthy standards introjected through identification with the hypnotist are displaced again by the habitual values and goals, which reanimate the neurosis.[2346]

[2341] Ibid., 164.
[2342] Ibid., 165.
[2343] Ibid.
[2344] Ibid.
[2345] Ibid., 167
[2346] Ibid., 258.

The reason for which hypnotic cures conducted in a superficial manner—as in mere symptom alleviation, for example—are temporary is that "they are wrought in the medium of an irrational dependency relationship."[2347] In the context of hypnoanalysis, however, this dependency is capitalized in the beginning of the treatment, and must not be avoided.

In hypnoanalysis, hypnosis can thus act as a catalyst to the analytic process by facilitating an identification of the patient with the analyst and by "bringing out during the trance, in almost pure culture, the deepest strivings and attitudes."[2348] The very nature of the hypnotic process induces feelings of closeness which are not possible under other techniques, and the patient's reactions to this intense relation, "with all his characteriologic defensive machinery and resistances," far from remaining in a regressive mother-infant state, will then "precipitate fears, resentments, expectations, demands, and the full range of interpersonal attitudes, which are component parts of the character structure."[2349] In this way, hypnosis is used to reveal the transference, which can then be worked through.[2350]

Furthermore, Wolberg's use of hypnosis in the analytic setting also addresses the question of the impossibility of neutral analysis. Unlike therapeutic models based on the ideal of the neutrality of the therapist, hypnoanalysis works with the notion that "the analysis and working through of resistance necessitates an active rather than a passive approach."[2351] It takes into account the idea that "no matter how much the therapist may try to remain objective, he cannot help reacting to the patient."[2352]

Wolberg's theory also has the merit of refuting misconceptions of the hypnotic subject which reduce him or her to a passive automaton. Indeed, hypnoanalysis mobilizes "tremendous activity on the part of the patient":

> Will not display the passive, immobile attitude seen during the usual trance. This innovation removes the feeling in the patient that he is an automaton who cannot move except at the order of the hypnotist. It creates

[2347] Ibid.
[2348] Ibid., 268.
[2349] Ibid., 267.
[2350] As Wolberg specifies, the analysis of the hypnotic transference does not prevent the advent of hypnotic trance—especially if the initial part of the treatment is used purely to train the subject and postpones the working through of the relation until the right moment. Indeed, hypnoanalysis is only advised once sufficient ego strength exists to tolerate the anxiety which appears "as defenses and resistances crumble and repressed unconscious impulses come to the surface." Ibid., 170.
[2351] Ibid., 260.
[2352] Ibid. 172. Indeed, "hypnosis can light up neurotic drives in the hypnotist himself … especially sadistic exploitation because of the seeming passivity of the patient," which establishes the necessity of the personal analysis of the analyst, like in classical analysis. Ibid. For a similar argument made by Roustang, see "The Ubiquity of Suggestion" in Chapter 1.

> an atmosphere in which the patient can express motor impulses that his repressions may inhibit in the waking state. The benefits of this activity *are more than cathartic*, for the patient begins to be assertive and to break through the superego restraints that are a determining factor in his neurosis.[2353]

As Wolberg argues, in the procedure of "working with the patient during the trance to arouse him to alertness and productivity … cognitive, affective and motor functions are stimulated. The patient moves about freely and participates actively in the analytic work," leading his "behavior to approximate his waking activity more or less."[2354] The hypnoanalytic framework thus preserves the patient's autonomy and refutes arguments against the purported dependency induced by hypnosis, by establishing a relation which is both affective and *horizontal*: The change in the technique replacing hypnotic passivity by activity probably has an important effect with respect to the basic image of authority as restrictive, repressive and insisted upon being right at all times. It opens the way to self-expressiveness.[2355]

Modern versions of Wolberg's model can still be found today, in the work of Erika Fromm and Michael Nash, for instance.[2356] As Fromm explains, modern hypnoanalysis employs the "four classical methods" derived from classic analysis: free association, dream interpretation, working with defenses and resistances, and transference analysis."[2357] According to Fromm, the ways in which hypnosis might be used in the analytic setting form a spectrum, ranging from more superficial symptom alleviation, to relatively short-term "hypnoanalytically oriented hypnotherapy," to in-depth and long-term hypnoanalysis proper, which aims to uncover "all or most of the historical roots" of conflict in the subject.[2358]

Like traditional analysis, hypnoanalysis encourages "uncovering, working through and new integration" in the subject, but also adds to analytic interpretation a "larger … arsenal of hypnotic techniques" which allow to access unconscious material, either faster or in more direct

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[2353] Ibid., 176, emphasis added.
[2354] Ibid., 164-165.
[2355] Ibid., 165.
[2356] As Erika Fromm explains in *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis,* her version of hypnoanalysis is based on classic psychoanalytic libido theory and ego-psychology, to which it adds object relations theory and Self psychology. For Fromm, hypnoanalysis also contributes to the elaboration of analytic theory by "increasing the understanding of primary and secondary process operations, and the nature of ego receptivity." Fromm, in *Hypnotherapy and Hypnoanalysis* (Hillsdale NJ; London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1986), 224.
[2357] Fromm, Ibid., 219. As Fromm observes, while resistance in analysis is manifested in the analysand's blocking and coming late to an appointment, in hypnosis it can be seen in the subject's refusal or inability to go into trance, blocking, and producing images which symbolize resistance (walls, locks, iron curtains, etc.). Unlike psychoanalysts, rather than interpret resistance, hypnotherapists accept it and waits until it can be worked through or around. Ibid., 208.
[2358] Ibid., 223.

ways, and only occur in a "modified state of consciousness."[2359] It makes use of specifically hypnotic phenomena such as age regression, automatic writing, dissociation, hypermnesia, and heightened imagery, to further the analytic working-through of the material that emerges during the hypnotic state.

As in Wolberg's model, for Fromm, the advantage of hypnoanalysis is that it "foster[s] transference regression," as infantile patterns of object relationships are (re)established with the hypnotherapist, and the transferential qualities which emerge are "evident throughout the clinical material."[2360] Hypnotic technique also allows for a certain degree of maneuvering in the unfolding of the transference: it facilitates the "avoidance or circumvention" of transference resistances by directing the attention, increasing permissive suggestions, and so on.[2361] Furthermore, although it is "no different in content" than in the psychoanalytic setting, hypnotic and analytic transference differ "in their manner of occurrence": in hypnosis, "full blown transference can occur very rapidly, often immediately after induction," and transference feelings "are much stronger" than in analysis, because the hypnotic situation "tends to foster infantile dependency transferences, especially in the beginning."[2362] Indeed, the hypnotist may be seen as "warm and nurturant," "hostile and domineering," or even "competitive."[2363] For example, as Ferenczi notes:

> The hypnotist with an imposing exterior, who works by frightening and startling, has certainly a great similarity to the picture impressed on the child of the stern, all-powerful father, to believe in, to obey. ... And the gentle stroking hand, the pleasant monotonous words that talk him/her to sleep: are they not a reimpressions of scenes that may have been enacted ... by a tender mother?[2364]

As Fromm explains, the hypnotic transference will be influenced by the style of the operator, the mode of inducing hypnosis, and of course, the "salient and repetitive patterns of the patient's object relations," unless the hypnotherapist's style "is so skewed toward being either domineering or nurturant" that it interferes with its "natural" unfolding.[2365]

[2359] Ibid., 224.
[2360] Ibid., 19; 18.
[2361] Fromm and Nash, *Psychoanalysis and Hypnosis,* 267.
[2362] Ibid., 19; 209.
[2363] Ibid., 18.
[2364] Sándor Ferenczi, "Comments on Hypnosis," in Shor and Orne, (eds.), *The Nature of Hypnosis, Selected Basic Readings,* 177-182 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 177.
[2365] Fromm, 19. Countertransference is also involved in hypnoanalysis: as Gill and Brenman showed, hypnosis is the complex interaction between the unconscious fantasies of both parties. See Merton Gill and Margaret Brenman, *Hypnosis and Related States: Psychoanalytic Studies In regression* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), in Fromm 19.

According to Fromm, the good hypnoanalyst must nevertheless provide an adequate "holding environment," establishing the boundaries of reality "as the good mother does when she holds the infant," especially in borderline and psychotic patients.[2366] The operator's moral and therapeutic duties also consists in respecting ethical boundaries in terms of the pace of the treatment and the degree of conscious access to unconscious material: "the conscientious and permissive hypnoanalyst ... will not demand—as even Freud did—that the patient bring up into the waking state all the material that came into awareness in the waking state."[2367] As noted in Chapter 1, whereas Fromm believes the hypnotic state leads to actual regression to infantile states, Nash argues that the regression in question is merely topographic—facilitating access to primary process thinking—but is not temporal.[2368]

3. Relaxation and Neocatharsis

A third means by which analysis and hypnosis can be considered as potentially overlapping is in the *spontaneous*—rather than formalized and controlled—emergence of hypnotic phenomena into the non-hypnotic, therapeutic setting. Unlike the hypnoanalysts, who may be considered as having intentionally worked towards the compatibility of analytic principles and hypnotic technique—without denying hypnosis the ability to be used non-analytically—Sándor Ferenczi saw hypnosis emerge spontaneously in the psychoanalytic setting. In this third sense then, hypnosis works itself in *from within* the analytic clinical setting, rather than being transposed into it on a theoretical level. In Ferenczi's work, this process is most clearly seen in the context of his "neocatharsis" technique, which emerged out of his dissatisfaction with the insight advocated by classical Freudian analysis in the spirit of the *Aufklärung*, and from his exploration of the therapeutic potential of "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*).[2369]

[2366] See Donald W. Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965); Fromm 213.
[2367] Fromm, 143.
[2368] See Michael Nash, "What, if Anything, is Regressed About Hypnotic Age Regression?," 42-52.
[2369] "Whereas formerly, one tried to obtain the therapeutic result as a reaction to the enlightenment of the patient, we now try to place the knowledge obtained by psychoanalysis directly in the service of our therapy, by directly provoking the corresponding personal experience (*Erlebnis*) on the basis of our insight, and explaining to the patient only this experience, which is naturally directly evident to him also." Ferenczi and Rank, *The Development of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Pub. Co, 1925), 56. As Thierry Bokanowski has shown, "it was the uncertainties related to the limits of analysis, and particularly the limits of remembering" that led Ferenczi to use "active techniques" in the clinical setting. However, because of the risk of "retraumatizing" the patient, Ferenczi then developed the technique of "elasticity," where the flexibility and empathy of the analyst, and the adaptation to the

Indeed, in "The Principle of Relaxation and Neocatharsis" (1930), Ferenczi deplores a gradual shift in classic analytic technique—as well as in the analytic relation—from the affective to the intellectual: "The highly emotional relation between physician and patient, which resembled that in hypnotic suggestion, gradually cooled down to a kind of unending association-experiment; the process became mainly intellectual."[2370] To him, the analytic relation seemed so vertical and authoritative that he "could not escape the impression that the relation between physician and patient was becoming far too much like that between teacher and pupil," which is to say, "didactic," even "pedantic."[2371]

Although he concedes that Freud's recommendation of the analyst's neutrality is the only justifiable attitude, Ferenczi notes that even the cold neutral attitude creates reactions in the analysand: "We cannot deny that it is possible for even the cool objectivity of the physician to take forms which cause unnecessary and avoidable difficulties to the patient."[2372] In other words, analysis appears to have fallen into the trap it tried to avoid with the Freudian gesture of cutting the cord with hypnosis—uniting itself once more with suggestive methods. As Chertock and Stengers argue and as we have suggested in Chapter 1, the "suggestive" dangers usually attributed to hypnosis can thus be taken to lie at the heart of every therapeutic relation, and in this sense, "the questions that the therapist using hypnosis may ask himself have to do with traits that are *not specific to him as using hypnosis*."[2373]

Ferenczi thus replaces the Freudian ideal of neutrality with that of an empathetic analyst with an "unfailing friendly attitude."[2374] As he argues in "The Principle of Relaxation and Neocatharsis," there "must be ways and means of making our attitude of friendly goodwill during the analysis intelligible to [the patient] without abandoning the analysis of transference-material

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patient's expectations, become central components of the therapeutic arsenal. See Thierry Bokanowski, *The Modernity of Sándor Ferenczi: His Historical and Contemporary Importance in Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 48. As in modern hypnotherapy with Ferenczi's concept of elasticity, the analyst "yield[s] to the patient's pull." Ferenczi, "The Elasticity of Psychoanalytic Technique," (1928), in *Final Contributions to the Problems and methods of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth, 1955), 95.

[2370] Ferenczi, "The Principle of Relaxation and Neocatharsis," 430. This paper, published in 1930, is based on Ferenczi's 1929 report presented at the 11th International Psycho-Analytical Congress in Oxford.

[2371] Ibid., 431. Furthermore, "a rigid and cold aloofness on the analyst's part represented to the patient a continuation of his infantile struggle with authority." Ibid., 436.

[2372] Ibid., 435.

[2373] Chertock and Stengers, 203; 209.

[2374] Ferenczi, in Bokanowski, 50.

or falling into the errors of those who treat neurotics … with a simulation of severity or of love."[2375] Ferenczi encourages the analyst's flexibility and indulgence towards the patient, "regardless of the extremes to which the latter may go in his words and his actions."[2376]

In this atmosphere of "confidence between physician and patient" which "secur[es] a fuller freedom of affect" for the subject, Ferenczi then observed that hysterical physical symptoms would suddenly make their appearance in his patients, "often for the first time in an analysis extending over years," and would sometimes be accompanied by spontaneous states of hypnosis: "Without any such intention on my part and without my making the least attempt to induce a condition of the sort, unusual states of consciousness manifested themselves, which might almost be termed autohypnotic."[2377] This leads Ferenczi to consider his neocatharsis—which he distinguishes from Freud and Breuer's original method, or "paleocatharsis," which only provided temporary relief—as a sign of the success of analysis.[2378] He thus reestablishes the therapeutic value of reliving fragments of the past *in statu nascendi,* as opposed to reconstructing them from an intellectual and conscious point of view:

> This time, the reconstructed past had much more feeling of actuality and concreteness about it than heretofore, approximated much more closely to an actual recollection, whereas till then the patients had spoken only of possibilities or, at most, of varying degrees of probability and had yearned in vain for memories. In certain cases, these hysterical attacks actually assumed the character of trances, in which fragments of the past were relived and the physician was the only bridge left between the patients and reality.[2379]

In comparison, classical analysis then appears as one long detour: "Was it really worthwhile to make that enormous detour of analysis of associations and resistances, to thread the maze of the elements of ego-psychology and even to traverse the whole metapsychology in order finally to arrive at the good old friendly attitude' to the patient and the method of catharsis, long believed to

[2375] Ibid., 435. His justification for the relaxation-principle is its usefulness (it "has produced results valuable for both theory and practice," especially in cases in which the analysis had "come to grief over the patient's apparently insoluble resistances" and a shift from frustration to relaxation was necessary. Ibid., 436.
[2376] In Bokanowski, 50. This was established so that the analyst would not be "tainted" with "professional hypocrisy," and that "a personal, authentic and privileged relationship between the patient and his analyst," much more focused on the *maternal* aspect of the analytic, could emerge. Ibid.
[2377] Ibid., 437.
[2378] See for instance: "There is all the difference in the world between the cathartic termination to a laborious psycho-analysis and the fragmentary eruptions of emotion and recollection which the primitive catharsis could provoke and which had only a temporary effect. The catharsis of which I am speaking is, like many dreams, only a confirmation from the unconscious, a sign that our toilsome analytical construction, our technique of dealing with resistance and transference, have finally succeeded in drawing near to the etiological reality." Ibid., 438.
[2379] Ibid., 437.

have been discarded?"[2380] Because of its insistence on affect over intellect, in Ferenczi's theory, the order of importance is reversed:

> The affective transformation is no longer the result of work carried out in the name of a truth whose only instrument is the ascetic requirement of that truth; control is no longer an ideal. Rather, the analytic work has as its purpose to evoke what is uncontrollable, to lead to the expression of something that is not measurable.[2381]

With the reintroduction of hypnosis—albeit spontaneous or unnamed—at the heart of analysis, regression to older techniques is framed by Ferenczi as progress.[2382] For him, this return to the "prehistory" of psychoanalysis can correspond to a move forwards: "even a retrograde movement, if it be in the direction of an earlier tradition, undeservedly abandoned, may advance the truth, and I honestly think that in such a case it is not too paradoxical to put forward an accentuation of our past knowledge as an advance in science. … A return to what was good in the teaching of the past most emphatically does not imply giving up the good and valuable contributions made by the more recent development of our science."[2383] The metaphor of the circle serves to suggest that, in a quasi-alchemical manner prompted by the passing of time, the "copper" of hypnosis has now, in its reuse, turned back into gold:

> Once more, a circle has been completed. Psycho-analysis began as a cathartic measure against traumatic shocks; it then devoted itself to a deeper study of neurotic phantasies and their various defense-mechanisms. Next, it concentrated rather on the personal affective relation between analyst and patient. … The sudden emergence in modern psycho-analysis of portions of an earlier technique and theory should not dismay us; it merely reminds us that, so far, no single advance has been made in analysis which has had to be entirely discarded as useless and that we must constantly be prepared to find new veins of gold in temporarily abandoned workings.[2384]

As I hope to have shown in this Appendix, in its broad sense, hypnosis thus does not necessarily have to be opposed to psychoanalysis. Rather, as the hypnoanalysts and Ferenczi contend, it can also carry with it the hope of a simplified and shortened analysis which posits the primacy of the affective over the intellectual, experience over insight:

[2380] Ibid., 438.
[2381] Chertock and Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason*, 93. As Bokanowski points out, in this highly regressive or "maternal" relationship, lived experience, interaction, infraverbal communication and "feeling with" (*Einfühlung*) are predominant over the more paternal, insight based Freudian model. Bokanowski, 51.
[2382] Indeed, certain aspects of Ferenczi's method bear striking resemblance to how hypnosis is practiced today, namely with negotiating between parts of the personality: "Sometimes, as I said, we achieve direct contact with the repressed part of the personality and persuade it to engage in what I might almost call an infantile conversation." Ferenczi, "The Principle of Relaxation and neocatharsis," 440.
[2383] Ferenczi, "The Principle of Relaxation and Neocatharsis," 428; 433.
[2384] Ferenczi, Ibid., 439.

> When we have fully understood the nature of the hypnotic attachment to the physician … we may come to a point when the analyst can use hypnosis as a part of his technique, without being obliged to fear that he may not be able in the end to loosen the addictive umbilical cord which attaches the patient to him. This possibility of readmitting hypnosis, or other suggestive methods, into our analytic therapy would perhaps be the culmination of the simplification of the analytic technique. … The final goal of psycho-analysis is to substitute, by means of the technique, affective factors of experience for intellectual processes. It is well known that this is just what is achieved in an extreme way in hypnosis, in which conscious material is called forth or eliminated according to need.[2385]

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Appendix B.

The Narrative Turn in the Therapeutic Field.

> *He who wishes to plumb and describe the mental cannot completely escape the creative writer's methods of conceiving and describing, however rigorous the will to cool, sober objectivity*—Freiherr von Berger, Review of *Studies in Hysteria,* (1896).

As I argued in Chapter 1, the "hypnotic" dimension at the heart of the therapeutic relation can be described as an "affective tie," as does Borch-Jacobsen in his discussion of analytic-hypnotic transference. Nevertheless, as I suggested in Appendix A, the "narrative turn" constitutes another, more aesthetically oriented way of bringing hypnosis and analysis together, and offers a framework which emphasizes common ground between various disciplines and theoretical models, rather than focusing solely on their differences. In this Appendix, I will trace the broader development of this "narrative turn" and the integrative approach to psychotherapy that it enables. I will thus extend the scope of inquiry to examine the way in which the narrative turn affected medicine, psychiatry and psychotherapy as a whole during the twentieth century.

[2385] Ferenczi and Rank, *The Development of Psycho-Analysis,* 62.

1. The Narrative Turn in Medicine

The narrative turn in medicine occurred mostly in reaction against biological models that strived to align the medical field with the natural sciences well into the twentieth century. In the United States, this process can be traced back to Abraham Flexner's 1910 report on medical education,[2386] which defined the goal of medicine as a "battle against disease" and established the biological sciences as the core content for all medical education.[2387] In Flexner's physiological-materialist view, clinicians should be "impregnated with the fundamental truths of biology" and consider that "the human body belongs to the animal world. It is put together of tissues and organs, in their structure, origin, and development not essentially unlike what the biologist is otherwise familiar."[2388] Despite its institutional success, Flexner's model was criticized during the second half of the twentieth-century for neglecting that human beings also "live meaning-centered lives and have complicated emotional and historical relations with their bodies," that they cannot be "reduced" or treated in the same way as a nonhuman bodies.[2389] Medicine in the 1970s and 1980s thus saw the emergence of models which emphasized social, psychological or person-centered dimensions and called into question this purely biological approach.[2390] As Lewis argues, this was in great part due to the changes brought about by the bioethics movement at the end of the century, which created a shift from beneficence-centered models to autonomy-centered approaches.[2391]

[2386] In 1908, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching chose Flexner to head a commission which aimed to assess U.S. medical education. According to Bradley Lewis in *Narrative Psychiatry,* the report was so successful that it "transformed U.S. medical schools and created the basic structure for medical education today." Lewis, 19.

[2387] Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Science.* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910), 23.

[2388] Flexner, *Medical Education,* 25.

[2389] Lewis, *Narrative Psychiatry,* 20. See for instance: "the body will not bend to ministrations from someone who cannot recognize the self within it, the self exposed to the new light of day by virtue of ruptures in its surface of health." Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 182.

[2390] For the "biopsychosocial" approach which takes into consideration the patient's psychic life and social context, see George Engel, "The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine," *Science* 196, no. 4286 (1977): 129-36. For a definition of medicine as tending to human suffering, see Eric Cassell, "The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine," *Journal of Medicine* 306, no.11 (1982): 639-45. See also Ian McWhinney's defense of a person-centered approach which "should aim to understand the meaning of illness for the patient." McWhinney, "Are we on the Brink of a Major Transformation in Clinical Method?" *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 135 (1986): 873.

[2391] As Lewis explains, the major consequence of the bioethics movement in the 1960s and 1970s was creating the shift from a beneficence-centered model (in which the goal is "to do good for the patient based on the clinician's judgment about the patient's needs") to an autonomy-centered model (where "the highest value for the clinician is to

During this time, medicine was reconceptualized as a "moral relationship" in which the patient *as person* became the new center of focus.[2392] Medicine became "a special moral enterprise because it is grounded in a special personal relationship—between one who is ill and another who professes to heal."[2393]

This "moral" dimension lead to an increased attention towards the subjective experience of the patient and its phenomenology and shifted the focus away from organic "disease," toward the experience of "illness."[2394] This central distinction is found in Arthur Kleinman in *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition* (1988), which presents a series of "illness narratives" that study chronic illness in several patients.[2395] For Kleinman, whereas *disease* refers to the clinical aspect of the problem—"reconfigured only as an alteration in biological structure or functioning"—*illness* designates the "innately human experience of symptoms and suffering."[2396] For Kleinman, the "moral core" of medicine necessarily involves *both* the control of disease and the care for the illness experience.[2397] Significantly, this requires that paying attention to the "deeply felt emotions within intimate personal relationships" that can no longer be dismissed as "peripheral tasks of medicine."[2398]

With the shift towards the phenomenology of illness, medicine became reoriented towards the human sciences, without which it would remain cut off from its "moral core."[2399] For Edmund Pellegrino for instance, the only way that the physician can "legitimately enter into a healing relationship" with the patient is through "a phenomenological understanding" of moral woundedness, which extends the medical domain into that of ethics.[2400] In this context, pathology

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respect the person's wishes and informed choices about his or her body and life"). Unlike what is seen in the "deeply paternalistic" tendencies of the beneficence-model, once the patient's autonomy became a priority, it becomes "imperative that clinicians know how to connect empathically with their patients," if only to identify their "desires and goals." Lewis, 152.

[2392] Lewis, 21, italics in original.

[2393] Edmund Pellegrino, *Humanism and the Physician* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 156.

[2394] As Lewis argues, "only with the turn to phenomenology and the experience of illness do the problems with this biomedical logic manifest themselves. With the turn to the phenomenology, it becomes clear that the challenge of being ill involves much more than biology alone." Lewis, 23.

[2395] As Lewis explains, the disease vs. illness distinction, "is at the heart of important differences between the practices of narrative medicine, narrative psychotherapy integration, and narrative psychiatry" and can be traced back to cartesian dualism, as well as to Karl Jaspers's distinction between scientific "explanation" and human "understanding." Lewis, 68.

[2396] Arthur Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 5.

[2397] Kleinman, Ibid., 253.

[2398] Ibid., 253. In fact, failure to address these issues constitutes a "fundamental flaw in the work of doctoring." Ibid.

[2399] Ibid, 266.

[2400] Lewis, 24.

is defined not as bodily disease but as "an altered state of existence arising out of an ontological assault on the humanity of the person."[2401] In fact, rather than a secondary aspect of the clinical encounter, the patient's wounded humanity constitutes the "bedrock of the healing relationship."[2402] Healing then becomes "a mutual act that aims to repair the defects created by the experience of illness."[2403] In this act, the ability to "meaningfully conceptualize" the illness experience became a condition of a truly effective healing.[2404] As is the case for ethical force of literature, understanding the experience of the other is thus at the center of the therapeutic relation.

Crucial to this conceptualization of illness is the process of narration. In *Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (1995) for instance, Arthur Frank describes illness as the loss of the patient's previous "life map," which forces the ill person to learn how to "think differently."[2405] For Frank, ill people "*need* to tell their stories" in order to construct new "maps," and "new perceptions of their relationships to the world."[2406] Narration thus plays an integral part in the healing process.

In fact, upon closer examination, narration is involved in medical healing on a double level: not only is storytelling healing for the patient, it also reveals the suggestive power inherent to all therapeutic relation, in a way which does not reduce it to unethical notions such as trickery or manipulation. As Howard Brody puts it, this dual aspect is summarized in the expressions, "storytelling as healing" and "healing as storytelling."[2407] In the first case, the suggestive aspect of stories functions somewhat like the Placebo Effect: storytelling is intrinsically healing.[2408] In the

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[2401] Pellegrino, *Humanism and the Physician,* 157. Pellegrino distinguishes four areas which are compromised by illness and constitute this "wounded humanity": loss of freedom of action, lack of information, loss of autonomy/increase in dependence, and forced transformation of self-image/increased vulnerability. In this view, the physician's responsibility now engages moral virtues such as authenticity, and not merely curative techniques: "if the professional does not consciously remedy the four deficiencies which impair the patient's expression of humanity, his 'profession' is inauthentic." Ibid., 127.

[2402] Ibid., 24.

[2403] Pellegrino, "Being Ill and Being Healed," in *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 156.

[2404] Ibid, 156.

[2405] Arthur Frank, *The wounded storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1.

[2406] Frank, Ibid., 3, italics in original. This process of storytelling can be collective, carried out in a group setting: by "hearing themselves tell their stories, by absorbing other's reactions to these stories, and by experiencing their stories being shared," the ill can work together and "create a new life map." Lewis, 26.

[2407] Brody, *Stories of Sickness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

[2408] For Brody, a "good story" provides three of the key elements found in the Placebo effect: "1) an explanation consistent with the person's worldview, 2) a connection to a community of practitioners and concerned others who share this world-view, and 3) a sense of mastery and control over the experience." Brody, *Stories of Sickness,* 13. As

second expression, the idea of "healing as storytelling" emphasizes the power of "doctor stories," which also "use a narrative logic to understand and explain the person's difficulties."[2409] Indeed, as we argued in Chapter 1, the clinician's discourse acts like a suggestion which is transferred to the patient's vocabulary, representations, and illness story. As Abraham Verghese notes, the clinician thus necessarily becomes a "character" in the patient's therapeutic journey:

> As physicians, most of us become involved in the stories of our patient's lives . . . we become players in these stories. Our actions change the narrative trajectory . . . and our patient's stories come to depend heavily on repetition of what we say.[2410]

This is why Verghese urges his fellow physicians to practice "storytelling craft," to increase their sensitivity to the inescapable narrative dimension of the medical profession.[2411]

This dual (suggestive and healing) aspect of storytelling is central to the practice of "narrative medicine," the approach named by Rita Charon, which explicitly aims to incorporate narrative concepts and techniques into Western medical practice and education.

Significantly, narrative medicine draws the parallel between "acts of healing and acts of reading," positing that attentive reading can prepare medical practitioners to better "receive" clinical stories.[2412] In this context, narrative "competency" is considered as "an empathy-inducing methodology" without which the physician lacks a full understanding of the patient's experience.[2413] As Charon puts it, "good readers make good doctors."[2414] Conversely, literature is thought to contribute to the education of the physician and "enable him to gain a better comprehension of the human values with which he deals daily," by cultivating linguistic and

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Brody argues, "suffering is produced and alleviated by the meaning that one attaches to one's experience," and "the primary human mechanism for attaching meaning to particular experiences is to tell stories about them," Ibid., 13.

[2409] Lewis, 27. As Bradley Lewis notes, these stories which take the form of diagnoses and case studies can sometimes be "chilling" and "scientific," rather than comforting. Ibid. However, in *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), Susan Sontag cautions against the abuse of narrative categories, arguing that although illness is experienced in terms of metaphor, disease itself is not metaphor, but "*truth.*" For Sontag, the most "truthful" way to be ill is "to cleanse oneself of all metaphorical thinking and to rely solely on the nonmetaphorical disease thinking of medicine and science." Sontag, in Lewis, 70. Lewis on the other hand, responds, "is disease thinking really free of metaphor, and is the meaning making of science really an exception to other forms of meaning making?" For Lewis, "metaphor enters science at its core through science's inescapable use of models to organize its research." Ibid.

[2410] Abraham Verghese, "The physician as storyteller," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 135, no. 11 (2001): 1012.

[2411] See Rita Charon, "Narrative medicine: Attention, representation, affiliation." *Narrative* 13, no. 3 (2005): 261–270; and *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[2412] Lewis, 29.

[2413] Keen, *Empathy,* 11. Indeed, clinicians must "learn how to listen to the multiple registers of the body, the self, and the storyline and how to respond ethically and dutifully to what we hear." Charon, *Narrative Medicine,* 182. As sickness opens the door to the "knowledge of one's self and one's values," and the person who cares for the sick must therefore be prepared to "midwife the life scrutiny that inevitably accompanies illness." Ibid, 182.

[2414] Charon, Ibid., 113.

imaginative sensitivity.[2415] The intervention of narrative into the medical field is thus first and foremost due to considerations of an ethical nature. Indeed:

> A language-sensitive physician might be enabled, by careful and imaginative word-choice, to impart more efficiently to patients and their families, and also to nurses and other co-workers, information they need to know. This more accurate and flexible comprehension and utilization of language is not separable from the awakened and functioning imagination. Empathy and compassion, functions of the imagination, lead to the 'inspired' word or phrase, the verbal accuracy which leads to further enlightenment, and in turn to a deeper comprehension of the situation.[2416]

Significant for the argument discussed in Chapter 4, Anne Scott advocates for the integration of Iris Murdoch's moral philosophy into medical training, arguing that the imaginative capacity of the health practitioner plays "a central part in [their] ability to communicate with a patient and in the type of person which [they] become."[2417] For Scott, the practitioner cannot empathize without imaginatively entering "into the world of the particular patient with whom one is in contact."[2418] Here, imaginative capacity directly participates in therapeutic competency, as Scott takes into consideration the influence of both the practitioner's "character" and behavior on the type of care which they provide.[2419]

Because "language influences thought and it is difficult to see how verbal thought does not affect the boundaries of imaginative activity," Scott argues that literary narratives may provide "first-order and also second-order concepts with which to enrich the language and thought

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[2415] J. Trautmann, *Healing Arts in Dialogue,* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), x.

[2416] Ibid, in Trautmann, 156. Conversely, linguistic sensitivity involves subtle listening and "reading" of the patient: "it is at least partially activity of the moral imagination" which allows the sensitive practitioner to "perceive the non-verbal cues" and "attend to patients sufficiently to know when [they are] capable of coping with bad news, rather than merely stating news in a cold, factual way." Scott, 45.

[2417] Anne Scott, "Imagination in Practice," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 23 (1997): 45. "Rather than offer a staple diet of Aristotelian ethics in the undergraduate curricula, perhaps instead one should follow Murdoch's suggestion and help the practitioner to develop vision and moral imagination, because this has a practical rather than a theoretical aim." Ibid. Scott defines the moral imagination as "a faculty directly relevant to the Aristotelian virtue of *phronesis*" Ibid., 47.

[2418] Ibid., 46.

[2419] As Scott notes, the behavior of the health care practitioner *does* have a moral impact on the patient, as "the dehumanising effects of being ignored or depersonalised by health care staff may not be readily evident to staff whose encounters with a patient are relatively brief. However, such encounters may harm the patient (and the staff involved for that matter); and they do carry moral evaluation." Conversely, imaginative failure becomes a therapeutic failure "practitioners can and should be held responsible for lacking these qualities or characteristics when it causes harm to patients (or indeed themselves as persons)." Nevertheless, Scott admits that in the healthcare professions, "one may certainly witness events so painful that the desire in one not to look, not to see, is over whelming." Nevertheless, she replies that repeated exposition should not lead to insensitivity, but encourage the cultivation of caring and careful attention: "It is also precisely because healthcare practitioners are almost daily faced with this reality in an unadulterated, undisguised way, that their ability to look, to see, to live with and grow from such experiences is all the more necessary." Ibid, 46-47.

processes" of medical students—which is "not an unimportant consideration" in a context of "growing subsumption of the language of the market place into the thinking, writing and policy-making about health care practice."[2420] This is why health professionals should be trained in a way that develops their moral vision and imagination, and become familiarized with narrative ways of looking at the world.

Indeed, as Rita Charon contends, familiarity with narratives helps cultivate in the physician a nuanced capacity for "attentive listening," adopting "alien perspectives," being "curious about other people's motives and experiences," and "tolerating the uncertainty" of stories.[2421] In this sense, narrative medicine "reminds mainstream medicine that it deals with more than pathophysiology; it deals with a whole persons."[2422] As Kathryn Hunter observes, this imposes a reevaluation of any strict "objectivist" pretensions of the medical field.[2423] It forces medicine to move *away* from the illusion of "objectivist, scientific reportage" and acknowledge that its case histories are "humanly constructed."[2424] This epistemological "loss" is nevertheless counterbalanced by an important gain on the level of the therapeutic relation, which is reorientated toward more humane modes of understanding and interacting, due to the ethical concern which extends beyond the bounds of concepts such as "disease" and "medical case."

2. The Narrative Turn in Psychiatry

According to Lewis, although psychiatric ethics have been "less influential" than medical ethics, it is "only a matter of time until the bioethics movement affects psychiatry as well."[2425] This is why in *Narrative Psychiatry,* Lewis urges psychiatrists to adopt the narrative turn which occurred in the medical field:

[2420] Ibid., 49.
[2421] Charon, "Narrative Medicine: Attention, Representation, Affiliation," 262.
[2422] Lewis, *Narrative Psychiatry,* 68.
[2423] Kathryn M. Hunter, *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 166.
[2424] Hunter notes a tension in narrative medicine between a "literary" and a "scientific" or "rational" pole, in which "narrative of any length and fullness or speculative force inevitably pulls against medicine's commitment to objective scientific study of human illness." For Hunter it is "essential" that "first, both tellers and listeners must recognize the narrator of the case history as contextually conditioned, and, second, the lived experience of the patient must be experienced." Ibid., 166.
[2425] Lewis, 152.

> We are in a paradoxical moment when medicine is more open than psychiatry to the human and the storied aspects of clinical work. As counterintuitive as it may seem, by taking the narrative turn, psychiatry does not risk 'getting away' from medicine as much as it gains the possibility of 'catching up' to medicine.[2426]

Anti-psychiatry

During the end of the twentieth century, a rise in antipsychiatric discourse fragilized the positivist, rationalist discourse and psychopathological realism that had been operative in the mental health professions until then.[2427] In what follows, I will sketch out the broad lines of such antipsychiatric arguments, before turning to the "narrative psychiatry" advocated for by Lewis.

Several classic anti-psychiatric works were seminal in this shift leading to the narrative turn in the mental health professions, many of which describe mental illness as "a result, no less than as a cause," of "the labels, the innuendos the rules, the secrets—in short, of the *language games* that surround it" in psychiatric discourse.[2428]

For instance, in *Asylums,* Erving Goffman suggested that most of "mental illness" can be explained by the social interactions that develop when such a concept is put to use.[2429] In Goffman's account, the "mental patient career" remolds the individual's relation to the world, submitting patients to a transformation "parallel to the one undergone by the inmate."[2430] Secondly, David Rosenhan's 1973 paper "On Being Sane in Insane Places" cast strong doubt on psychiatric institutions' ability to distinguish "sanity" from madness.[2431] Rosenhan's famous study aimed to expose not only the dehumanizing treatment of patients in psychiatric wards, but also the self-fulfilling prophecy in which the diagnosis of schizophrenia affects the future behavior of doctors

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[2426] Ibid., 18.

[2427] Already at the beginning of the twentieth century, the birth of psychoanalysis and Karl Jaspers' phenomenological psychiatry caused psychiatry to move away from the disease logics of the biological approach, which explained mental illness in neurological terms and prescribed its cure with pharmaceutical interventions. According to Jaspers, a "pluralistic" psychiatry would combine both "causal" research (studying neuroanatomical or genetic factors) and "meaning" research (as in psychoanalysis). See Lewis, 60.

[2428] Omer and Alon, 197.

[2429] See E. Goffman, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions" (1957), in *Asylums* (New York: Doubleday, 1961) and Foucault, *Histoire de la Folie à l'âge classique,* (Paris, Gallimard, 1972).

[2430] As Omer and Alon point out, "if we ever conceived of language games as playful, Goffman's work will certainly disabuse us." Omer and Alon, 197.

[2431] In Rosenhan's undercover study, eight pseudo-patients checked themselves into mental institutions, claiming to suffer from a single symptom: hearing a voice which said "thud, empty, hollow"—or as Susannah Cahalan has pointed out, "dull, empty, thud," depending on whether one bases oneself on Rosenhan's correspondence or published paper. All were diagnosed with schizophrenia and then eventually released—after 7 to 54 days, depending on the case—with the diagnosis of "schizophrenia in remission." Cahalan examines the inconsistencies between Rosenhan's paper and his correspondence and private notes for a manuscript which remained unpublished. See Susannah Cahalan, *The Great Pretender* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2019).

and patients alike.[2432] Furthermore, in *The Divided Self,* Ronald Laing accused psychiatry, even in its more humane forms, of placing "the bars of Bedlam and the locked doors *inside* the patient."[2433] Challenging the medical model of mental illness, he argued that, failing to grasp the experience of schizophrenic patients, psychiatrists define schizophrenia by its exterior symptoms, "irrespective of the context in which these symptoms are manifested," and naively assume that the observer "*add[s] nothing* to the entity being diagnosed" or that they perceive more than an aspect of the observed reality.[2434] In this way, they become the "dupes of a vocabulary that depicts the individual as a self-contained entity to be understood without reference to the relational world."[2435] For Laing, the experience and symptoms of mental illness "cannot be grasped through the methods of clinical psychiatry and psychopathology … but, on the contrary, require the existential-phenomenological method to demonstrate their true human relevance and significance."[2436] Finally, in *The Myth of Mental Illness,* Thomas Szasz famously argued that the behavior of mental patients has less to do with symptoms, illness or diagnosis than with "messages communication, symbolization and control."[2437] For Szasz, the very concept of mental illness is a form of "psychoimperialism" which overemphasizes the physical and neglects the communicative and symbolic aspect of "symptoms."[2438]

[2432] For a critique of Rosenhan's paper, see Robert Spitzer, "On Pseudoscience in Science, Logic in Remission, and Psychiatric Diagnosis," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology.* 84, no. 5 (1975): 442-52.

[2433] Ronald D. Laing, *The Divided Self. An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin books, 1960), 12. Laing proposes instead an "existential" account of madness, which would be able to "see the case *qua* person." 18.

[2434] Omer and Alon, 197. As Laing notes, "we have described the same line, which, if seen differently, can be the one side of a vase" or "the outline of a face." Laing, *The Divided self,* 21.

[2435] Laing*, The Divided self,* 197. The words of psychiatric vocabulary are "specifically designed to isolate and circumscribe the meaning of the patient's life to a particular clinical entity," and "it is a form of self-deception to suppose that one can say one thing and think another…The thought is the language, as Wittgenstein has put it." Ibid., 18-19.

[2436] Ibid., 18. As he notes, "dualism cannot be avoided within the psychopathological frame of references except by falling into a monism that reduces one term to the other, and is simply another twist to a spiral of falsity." For him, "only existential thought has attempted to match the original experience of oneself in relationship to others in one's world by a term that adequately reflects this totality. Thus, existentially, the concretum is seen as a man's *existence*, his *being-in-the-world.*" Therefore, "unless we realize that man does not exist without 'his' world nor can his world exist without him, we are condemned to start our study of schizoid and schizophrenic people with a verbal and conceptual splitting that matches the split up of the totality of the schizoid being-in-the-world." Ibid., 24; 19; 20.

[2437] Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness. Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), in Omer and Alon, 201.

[2438] Gregory Bateson also emphasized the communicative dimension of disease, drawing attention to "meta-messages" and "metacommunication failures" in mental illness. His famous theory of the "double bind" with schizophrenic patients played an important role in the decline of psychopathological realism as it shifted attention from the illness to the "system of communication patterns" involved in the disease. For Bateson, mental illnesses are "typical examples of putative substances" that should be redescribed in nonessentialist terms. See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology*

For example, defining hysteria as a mental illness involves "one in a series of language games that are linked to the concept if *illness.*"[2439] In this process, the fact that "others are a part of this demonstration" is neglected, even though—as we saw in Chapter 1—"we can hardly conceive of hysteria without an audience."[2440] For Szasz, on the contrary, the hysteric's behavior is better understood as "an attempt (albeit conflicted and unconscious) at influence," rather than an illness.[2441]

It is from anti-psychiatric critiques such as these that the narrative turn in psychiatry was then able to emerge.

A Turn Away from Biopsychiatry

More specifically, as Lewis shows in *Narrative Psychiatry,* narrative approaches emerged as a reaction against the second era of biopsychiatry, which was predominant in the 1980s and the DSM-III.[2442]

As Eric Kandel explains, the biological model in psychiatry states that "all mental processes, even the most complex psychological processes, derive from operations of the brain."[2443] In this context, mental illness is explained by the "broken brain" model, a "key metaphor of contemporary psychiatric discourse" which during the second wave of biopsychiatry, came into play "at the subtle level of chemical functioning," as seen in the now popular notions of "chemical—or biochemical—imbalance."[2444]

As Lewis argues, biopsychiatric "disease logics" become integrated into individuals' conceptual systems, imposing themselves as the only possible model for self-understanding, or as

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of the Mind, (New York, Ballantine, 1972); Bateson et. al., "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia." *Behavioral Science* 1, no. 4 (1956): 251-254; and Omer and Alon, 207.

[2439] Ibid, 203. "One is led to divide the phenomena of hysteria into symptoms and pathogens… conceptualized in terms such as *energies, blocked libido, bound cathexes,* and their like; *symptom formation* is viewed as a process of *energy conversion,* and cure of energy *release.*" Ibid.

[2440] Ibid.

[2441] Omer and Alon, 203.

[2442] Indeed, despite the antipsychiatric discourse of the previous decades, after the 1980s, "the tide had turned dramatically back toward biopsychiatry," until psychiatry became, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, "fully in the grips of a second biological era." Lewis, 61-63. Indeed, the 1980 DSM-III signaled a "turning of the page on psychoanalysis" and "a redirection of the discipline [of psychiatry] toward a scientific course." Edwin Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 302.

[2443] Kandel 1998, 460.

[2444] Lewis, 89. See Nancy Andreasen, *The Broken brain* (1984). For Lewis, this is "a key metaphor of contemporary psychiatric discourse." See its derivative descriptions in the social sciences: in anthropology, the "pharmaceutical person" (Emily Martin, 2006), or in sociology the "neurochemical self" (Nicholas Rose, 2003). Listed in Lewis, 89.

Tanya Luhrmann puts it, "seep into popular culture like the dye from a red shirt in hot water."[2445] The "metaphors and plots" of neuroscience and psychopharmacology are thus transposed into the popular imagination and culture. This process, as Lewis observes, is strikingly captured in contemporary novelistic prose, as seen for example in a passage from Jonathan Franzen's novel *The Corrections* (2001), where biopsychiatric tropes have become a core part of the main character's "self-storying":[2446]

> Although in general Gary applauded the modern trend toward individual self-management … he was less than thrilled to be given responsibility for his own personal brain chemistry, especially when certain people in his life, notably his father, refused to take any such responsibility. But Gary was nothing if not conscientious. As he entered the darkroom, he estimated that his levels of Neurofactor 3 (i.e., serotonin: a very, very important factor) were posting seven-day or even thirty-day highs, that his Factor 2 and Factor 7 levels were likewise outperforming expectation, and that his Factor 1 had rebounded from an early-morning slump related to the glass of Armagnac he'd drunk at bedtime. He had a spring in his step, and agreeable awareness of his above-average height and his late summer suntan. His resentment of his wife, Caroline, was moderate and well contained. Declines led key advances in key indices of paranoia (e.g., his persistent suspicion that Caroline and his two older sons were mocking him), and his seasonally adjusted assessment of life's futility and brevity was consistent with the overall robustness of his mental economy. He was not the least clinically depressed.[2447]

What this example makes apparent (and is central for our argument about the suggestive dimension of the therapeutic relation) is that "like other metaphors," medical metaphors "create a kind of 'seeing as'" which ultimately becomes internalized "in a deeply naturalized way, to the point where 'seeing as' becomes 'being as'." [2448] Once one adopts a metanarrative perspective however, the biomedical model becomes "a choice, just as a humanistic model or a cognitive behavioral model would be."[2449]

[2445] Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds*, 20. Here Lewis is not trying to *revoke* this mode, but restate is as one mode among several means of self-fashioning: "Narrative identifications can use plots containing disease logics and disease metaphors as easily as they can use other logics and metaphors…Science and medicine can be brought into narrative identifications as well as any other story elements." Lewis, 70-71.

[2446] "When models of mental illness seep from the clinic into the culture, they become part of our cultural metaphors of self-experience. …These culturally located self stories scaffold our narrative identity and provide us with a compass for living." Lewis, 88.

[2447] Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 139–40.

[2448] Lewis, 148. See for instance the critique of the DSM's "claim to atheoreticism," and contention that scientific "assumptions and theories" are just as inescapable as "social, political, and moral philosophical ones." Edwin Wallace, "Psychiatry and its Nosology: A Historico-philosophical Overview," in Sadler et. al., eds., *Philosophical Perspectives on Psychiatric Diagnostic Classification* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). For Lewis, psychiatry's pursuit of atheoretical simplification even "flies in the face of the twentieth century's most respected philosophers of science," for whom "idealized theoretical neutrality is a logical and empirical impossibility." Lewis, 2.

[2449] Ibid., 148. Important to our argument is the selective, aspectival dimension of clinical interpretation: "none of these competing perspectives 'discover' the final reality … nor do they completely 'construct'" it. Rather, each provides a perspective that "evokes, highlights, and foregrounds *some aspect* of her real situation while simultaneously backgrounding *other aspects*." Ibid., 150, emphasis added. As Lewis eloquently shows, "both sides of the science wars appealed to the *world*, but each used a different metaphor to understand it. Defenders of science as discovery

Narrative approaches thus appeared in reaction to psychiatry's "relentless disease mongering, its overuse of polypharmacy," its "knee-jerk medicating for relatively minor difficulties not only in adults but also in children and adolescents."[2450] For Lewis, not only is biopsychiatry reductive on a theoretical level, it is also responsible for the current "imbalance" in the field of psychiatry, now that the "hype and excitement of neuroscience, cognitive science, psychopharmacology, and cognitive therapy have begun to erode [its] the human dimension."[2451] For him, "embrac[ing] the wisdom of narrative medicine" is thus a means for psychiatry to retrieve its lost balance, to turn away from excess focus on the physiological and toward "ethical and recovery-oriented clinical work."[2452]

Narrative Psychiatry

Although the narrative turn made its entry in psychiatry at the same moment as critiques of biopsychiatry, for Lewis "narrative psychiatry" should be considered as "less of a critique, and more of a way forward."[2453] As he portrays it, narrative psychiatry is similar to narrative medicine and psychotherapy in that it is person-centered, stresses the importance of empathetic connection and listening, and considers that "the stories patients use to describe their lives also shape those lives."[2454] It specificity, however, is that it remains open to the use of psychiatric medication, and according to Lewis, that it brings "much more nuance and self-reflection to the disease/illness

understood it in terms of an ultimate reality, independent of human cognition. Defenders of science as construction understood it in terms of phenomenology of experience—something much more akin to the idea of worldview or zeitgeist. The same term, *world,* brought up very different associations for the competing sides, and the metaphorical oscillation between world as ultimate reality and world as zeitgeist created the either/or conditions of a bitter science wars battle without compromise." Ibid.

[2450] Lewis, 64.

[2451] Ibid., 31. For Lewis, students and practitioners are left with "limited conceptual tools," since "knowledge about neurotransmitters and genetics does not help psychiatrists fully appreciate the interpretive dimensions of human problems." Lewis, ix. For him such attempts to do away with human complexity in the name of theoretical clarity can even lead to a return of the repressed: "We should also remember that reductions 'forget' about the complex, which means that the complex is often surprising and disturbing when it inevitably reappears later on." Lewis, 2. As we will note in the second part of this chapter, the form of "unknowing" inherent to accepting and integrating the complexity of reality thus turns out to be a valuable skill, both on therapeutic and ethical levels.

[2452] Ibid., xvi.

[2453] Ibid., 64.

[2454] Ibid., 164. It aims to show that "the root metaphors people use to understand and plot their troubles become the key elements of who they wish to be." In narrative psychiatry, knowing "which consequences are best and which aspect of ultimate reality should be emphasized cannot be answered by the clinician. These questions must be answered by the client because, in the end, it is his or her life." Ibid., 81; 164.

distinction" than both mainstream medicine *and* psychotherapy.[2455] Indeed, narrative psychiatry is not *opposed* to using the disease model of mental suffering.[2456] Rather, it considers the psychopharmacological frame as "one of an array of possible tools" that can be woven into an "eclectic narrative of treatment."[2457] Narrative psychiatrists are thus "open to this [biological] form of self-making and respect it as much as they would other forms of self," while remaining "aware of the often problematic power dynamics of this emerging" from it.[2458] They remain open to "biopsychiatric stories of 'chemical imbalances" and 'genetic predisposition,'" but also to "psychoanalysis, humanistic psychotherapy, family therapy," etc.[2459] The narrative approach aims to provide psychiatry with a flexibility that allows it to "move with comfort in and between" these many logics, past the "long history of psychiatric factionalism and competing orientations."[2460]

According to Lewis, to achieve this flexibility the clinician must "learn about narrative theory and be able to apply that theory to thick literary case examples that allow that theory to come to life."[2461] The psychiatrist is therefore encouraged to "have read widely in the world of fiction, memoir, and biography, with an eye to their relevance for clinical work."[2462] For Lewis it is "better to turn to fictional presentations for narrative psychiatry cases," because in non-narrative clinical approaches, the clinician's story "comes to feel compelling" and the complex and subtle

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[2455] For Lewis although both mainstream medicine and psychotherapy (including narrative therapy) can afford to leave the distinction untouched, psychiatry cannot. Indeed, mainstream medicine "focus[es] almost exclusively on disease—to the point that the personal experience of illness all too often becomes lost in the clinical encounter. Even narrative medicine does not have to trouble the disease/illness distinction, and can work with an additive logic with regard to it, considering that "disease is important and also so is illness," thus leaving the distinction intact. Psychotherapy on the other hand focuses on experience and illness, and most practitioners "would generally agree with Freud that people's biological constitution matters, but they would also agree with his decision to bracket biology and keep the focus of psychotherapy on psychological, or experiential, variables," and "even narrative psychotherapy integration … remains focused on illness." Ibid., 194, note 4.

[2456] "Its "knowledge base" is also meant to include "not only the sciences and quantitative social sciences but also ethnography, philosophy, history, literature, the arts, and consumer perspectives." Ibid., 74.

[2457] Ibid., 73. "Disease makes meaning one way, illness another way. But they are both meanings, and they both rely on the tools of language to shape their meaning." Ibid., 69.

[2458] Ibid., 72. They are thus are encouraged towards caution and transparency, striving to "navigate their complicated relationship to pharmaceutical self-making by sharing with their clients their ambivalence during their discussion of drug treatment options… and they make it a point to discuss the side effect risks and questionable efficacy of many these medications." Ibid.

[2459] Ibid., 47.

[2460] Ibid., 73.

[2461] Ibid., 82. For "thick" descriptions, see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973; New York: Basic Books, 2017) and Gilbert Ryle, "The Thinking of Thoughts, What is 'Le Penseur' Doing?" *Studies in Anthropology* (1968) 11:11.

Here Lewis opposed thick stories to the "thin" diagnostic categories of the DSM. Indeed, "one of the most important outcomes of standard, non-narrative clinical training is to create clinicians who are able to sort through a thick story and turn it into the kind of thin story that shows up in medical records and in the clinical literature." Lewis, 77.

[2462] Ibid., 147.

variables he or she has "abstracted out of it" come to seem irrelevant, thereby leading to oversimplification.[2463] Literature, on the other hand, provides "a much thicker set of contextual variables" and thus become the "ideal place to gather case histories."[2464]

When presented with the story of a fictional character, the patient is then invited to imagine different interpretations and outcomes, which helps them develop an "experiential understanding of the considerable degrees of freedom and agency they have with regard narrating life stories."[2465] Together with patients, the psychiatrist can then use a combination of literary examples and case histories to imagine "alternative stories," revealing the broad range of treatment options that a single "reality" can lead to. On the other hand, clinicians who are never exposed to narrative theory, and who "never have the option to see [it] played out in literary case examples," are reduced to working from within a single model.[2466] Considering it "as truth rather than metaphor," they remain unaware of the "multiple possibilities for interpreting illness," failing to fully grasp the ethical dimension of their work.[2467] Lewis' narrative psychiatry is thus far from being immune to the antipsychiatry or recovery movement critiques mentioned higher up.

Lewis would argue that narrative psychiatry is one step removed from such critiques, which remain stuck in the either/or dynamics of the science wars. For him, the narrative approach in psychiatry allows to move beyond binary logics, negotiating the contradictions in the field without developing "rigid" dichotomies such as "anti-psychiatry versus pro-psychiatry, or drug therapy

[2463] Ibid., 79. Memoir and autobiography can also be used, but as Lewis points out, "these genres also tend to reduce ambiguity in the process of the telling of the narrative." Lewis does concede that examination of the clinical literature, although it is "not a good place to look for stories open to multiple interpretations," is "excellent" for "finding resources for narrative meaning," since the "root metaphors" of biopsychiatry, psychoanalysis, or cognitive therapy all reveal "different ways of perceiving, selecting, and understanding problems," which can be exposed to the patient as interpretive options. Ibid., 79; 81.

[2464] Ibid., Furthermore, "key philosophical and conceptual terms from literary theory" can help psychiatrists achieve this "deep appreciation of narrative," which comes into play in the production of "doctor stories." Lewis, viii. As we shall see further down, these concepts often revolve around notions of characterization, focalization, narrative plot.

[2465] Ibid., 79.

[2466] Ibid., 82.

[2467] Ibid. Significant for the argument we defended in Chapter 4, Lewis indeed notes that choosing between different structures of understanding is a "deeply ethical and political choice," which is "less about science and 'truth' and more about personal preference and affinity… a choice about who one wants to become." Ibid. He also notes the broader epistemological implications of his claim: "the hidden pedagogy of science contains an unstated ontology of one, and only one, true world. Clinicians identified within this ontology will find it hard to make sense of the possibility that [various] interpretations of [a case] could be "true." For mainstream psychiatrists, "the idea that all these interpretations could be "true" borders on the absurd, even the insane." For Lewis, narrative multiplicity "sidesteps the usual modernist dichotomy of realism verses relativism. It allows psychiatrists to embrace a flexible postpsychiatric ontology of semiotic realism and an epistemology of pluridimensional consequences." Lewis, 144; 191, note 18.

versus talk therapy."[2468] Lewis' account is thus clearly in the service of the rehabilitation—*via* its narrative extension—of the psychiatric field, of an attempt to move beyond "equating awareness of the limits of biopsychiatry with the legacy of antipsychiatry."[2469] By sidestepping these alternatives, it aims to promote a "subtle appreciation of the many truths of psychiatry without overvaluing any of these truths as absolute."[2470] Whether narratively-oriented psychiatrists remain as open to the alternatives at their disposal as Lewis encourages them to remains uncertain.

3. The Narrative Turn in Psychotherapy

As we saw, during the twentieth century, postmodern and anti-psychiatric discourse caused "the precious identity between science and therapy" to be "deeply shaken."[2471] In response to the diversity of contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches that emerged from this upheaval, a "broadly integrative" approach to psychotherapy emerged, in an attempt to create unity in a discipline that became fragmented into a multiplicity of available models.[2472] It is in this context that the turn toward narrative intervenes, as a metatheoretical solution that would satisfy the desire for more integrated approaches to psychotherapy. [2473] Indeed:

[2468] Ibid., 64. Also, "narrative theory provide(s) the optimal bridge between postpsychiatric cultural studies and clinical practice. Compared with postmodern theory and cultural studies, narrative theory not only "focuses much more detailed attention on individual stories and individual lives," it "helps connect the dots between large paradigms, like biopsychiatry or psychoanalysis, and the intimate details of personal life stories," allowing us to see how people "use and in some ways are used by available paradigms to make sense of their lives" and those of others. Lewis, xii.

[2469] Ibid., ix.

[2470] Ibid., 16. Rather than a means of encouraging confusion, it is even framed by Lewis as an antidote to dogmatism: "When simplicity multiplies, instead of becoming hegemonic, it becomes one of many. Through multiplication, each simplicity loses the violence of totalitarian control." Ibid.

[2471] Omer and Alon, 232-235. In *The Family Networker,* Bill O'Hanlon suggests that after the Freudian and cognitive approaches, narrative therapy constitutes the "third wave" of therapeutic theory, corresponding to the mode of the "postmodern." O'Hanlon, 1994, 19 in Abels and Abels, 2001, xi. In this context, science and research are no longer considered as being the exclusive and "final arbiters of absolute truth," but simply "very well-tried procedures for multiple debate and consensual validation." Omer and Alon, 235. In the most extreme postmodern conceptions of psychotherapy however, "standing either for or against a binding lineage with science involves one either in wishful thinking or irresponsibility." However, more nuanced views are possible, such as considering, as Omer and Alon do, that the consensual aspect of scientific validity is its "strength," that "research plays a vital role even under a pluralist dispension" and is, no less than before, "one of the most powerful antidotes against the anarchy of 'anything goes'." Ibid., 229; 235.

[2472] Lewis, 36.

[2473] Psychotherapeutic integration looks beyond single-school divisions and focuses on common approaches. See for instance the *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration,* founded in 1991, and the SEPI (Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration)'s mission statement: "In promoting dialogue between therapists of differing theoretical orientations and between clinicians and researchers, SEPI aims to advance our understanding of the sources of effective therapeutic change and to meet the needs of the growing ranks of integrative therapists." https://www.sepiweb.org/page/3, accessed 05/20/2020. As Lewis notes, the banner "Narrative psychotherapy

> Narrative theory provides not only an open-minded alternative to contemporary psychotherapy turf wars, but also a metatheoretical framework for integrating and making sense of the many available therapeutic options. The tremendous advantage of a narrative metatheoretical frame for psychotherapy integration is that it allows a renewed appreciation of the many forms of psychotherapy without having to choose one true and only correct method and without falling into an anything-goes relativism.[2474]

According to Lewis, rather than a technique, the narrative approach is a *view* that can adapt to various school of thought. Indeed, "it is possible for a psychoanalytic humanist, systemic or cognitive therapist to work narratively within the framework of her own approach. The new narratives they would help to create would naturally be colored by their own theoretical inclinations."[2475] Nevertheless, because of the profound impact that ways of looking have on our ways of understanding, adopting the narrative "view" ultimately modifies the practitioner's relation to theory, whose "propositions are no longer viewed as objective truths but provisional ways of organizing the therapeutic material."[2476]

Furthermore, as Lewis argues, narrative orientation in psychotherapy provides as a potential solution to the controversial "Dodo bird verdict," according to which—as Lewis Carroll's dodo puts it—*everybody wins.*[2477] Whereas in classic conceptions, therapeutic cure was conceived as the natural outcome of the therapist's scientific dedication to truth, the Dodo Bird verdict states that no theoretical approach in psychotherapy "can claim decided superiority over another."[2478] In this sense, as Saul Rosenzweig writes, "whether the therapist talks in terms of psychoanalysis or Christian Science is ... relatively unimportant as compared with the formal consistency with which the doctrine employed is adhered to, for by virtue of this consistency the patient receives a schema for achieving some sort and degree of personality organization."[2479] And indeed, later in the twentieth century, the "common factors approach" to research—which claims that factors such as the therapeutic alliance are more important than specific technical differences—showed that in

integration" has recently appeared as a more formal approach to the otherwise "informal eclecticism" adopted by many therapists. Lewis, 41; 32.

[2474] Ibid., 32.

[2475] Omer and Alon, 180.

[2476] Ibid., 183.

[2477] The Dodo Bird Verdict essentially tells the therapists that "it is not important what you do, as long as you do it with full conviction and establish a good relationship with the client within a socially endorsed framework." Omer and Alon, 231. See Rosenthal, Luborsky et. al., "The Dodo Bird Verdict Is Alive and Well—Mostly," *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice.* 9, no. 1 (2002): 2-12.

[2478] Omer and Alon, 232. Indeed, "in the Freudian mode, psychoanalysis worked "through its very neutrality and objectivity," behavioral therapy functioned by "transforming the clinic into a laboratory" and cognitive therapy by "extending scientific rationality to life." Ibid.

[2479] Saul Rosenzweig, "Some Implicit Common Factors in Diverse Methods of Psychotherapy: At last the Dodo said, 'Everybody has won and all must have prizes,'" *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 6 (1936): 413–15.

psychotherapy, "different treatments work similarly well because they share the factors that determine change."[2480] This suggests that the positive effects of therapy have relatively little to do with the specific interventions of therapist and come largely from nonspecific factors: "nowadays, the answer to the question of 'Who wins' has a great deal to do with goals of therapy and the preferences of the client."[2481]

Narrative Therapy

Just as in the medical field, Rita Charon was responsible for the appellation "narrative medicine," in the field of psychotherapy, the techniques which embodies the narrative turn explicitly is the "narrative therapy" introduced by Epston and White in family therapy during the second half of the twentieth century.

Like modern hypnotherapy, "narrative therapy" corresponds to an attempt to reconcile therapeutic practice with the meta-psychological notion of a multiple, discursive, constructed self.[2482] This is what leads Parry and Doan to argued that "narrative family therapy is for postmodernism, what psychoanalysis was for modernism."[2483] In Epston and White's theory, the client comes to therapy with a "broken" or "problematic" story, constructed from a variety of

[2480] See J. D. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (1963; Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University press, 1973).

[2481] Lewis, 41. See M. Lambert, "Implications for outcome research for psychotherapy integration," in Norcross and Goldstein, eds., *Handbook of psychotherapy integration*, (New York: Basic Books, 1992). 94–129. Lambert's study based on an extensive psychotherapy research database, concluded that 40% of change is due to the client's personal and environmental resources, 30 %t from common features of the therapist (such as warmth, empathy, acceptance, and encouraging taking risks), and 15% to the expectations and trust of the client, i.e. the Placebo effect. As Lewis points out, "that left only 15 percent of change coming from the therapist's specific techniques and theoretical models." Lewis, 37.

[2482] "In a time of different worlds and different languages, different selves will be called upon to perform the many different deeds expected of people in their different worlds." Parry and Doan, *Story Re-Visions,* 27. See also*:* "every person is many persons; a multitude made into one person: a corporate body, incorporated, a corporation." N. O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Random House, 1996), 147. See also Coetzee: "There is a true sense in which writing is dialogic: a matter of awakening the counter voices in oneself and embarking upon speech with them," which entails "step[ping] down from the position of what Lacan calls 'the subject supposed to know'." Coetzee, *Doubling the Point*, 65.

[2483] Parry and Doan, 5. For them, Freud was a modernist, as "to the extent that therapists of any school continue to operate within assumptions of single-selfhood and its essential knowability, they remain steadfastly within a modernist sensibility." Ibid., 13. The "epistemological hangover" of modernism—understood as a last attempt to preserve the "sacred and mythic narratives of the Western tradition"—is the assumption that "with understanding, with knowing, comes freedom." For Freud this involved "adhering to the faith that if his patients probed deeply enough they would *find* the answers they were looking for: in the unconscious" and that once restored to consciousness, the "interferences and resulting distortions… could end, and their perceptions would once again correspond to reality as it was." Parry and Doan, Ibid., 11; 23; 8.

disempowering plots, metaphors, narrative identifications, and perspectives.[2484] When the incidents in a client's life-narrative become too constraining or threatening, the foundation is then "set for inquiry, which can lead to change."[2485] Narrative therapy is generally carried out in two phases: deconstruction—where the therapist look for gaps and breaks in the client's internalized story—and "reauthoring"—where they help the client "restory" their narrative(s), by presenting or expanding future options and "question[ing] whether values and preferences are absolute or constructed."[2486] In order to do so, the client works with a therapist or social worker who must be "attuned to the philosophical and practical applications of narrative practice."[2487]

More specifically the initial process of "deconstruction" involves identifying "the terms, the shape and the plot of an individual's childhood survival story," in the hopes that "those involved in these narratives begin to see them as hermeneutics rather than as life itself."[2488] Indeed, until identified as such and modified, the "power" of a limiting story will keep the person "looking backward for direction … rather than facing forward to meet what is coming."[2489] Having become problematic, these limiting storylines must then be examined and exposed, *as narratives.*[2490] Here

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[2484] See for instance, Michael White**,** *Re-authoring Lives: Interviews and Essays* (Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Center Publications, 1995); Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York and London: Norton & Co, 1990). Like narrative medicine or psychiatry, narrative therapy works directly narratives that make up the "landscape of the person's life." Abels and Abels, *Understanding Narrative Therapy*, *a Guidebook For The Social Worker* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2001), 1. Here, a world view is thought to be constituted by "a set of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, values and knowledge that influence a person's comprehensive outlook on life" and evolves into "a frame of reference that organizes the person's perceptions of others and the world in general." A world view is made up of a conceptual map, and "sets the parameters for what people accept as the truth." Ibid., 60.

[2485] Abels and Abels, *Understanding Narrative Therapy*, 2.

[2486] Lewis, 50. Like hypnotherapy, narrative therapy is future-oriented, and aims to "discover still unformed, but preferred stories that lie dormant in the subtext of their life narrative." Ibid., 3. However, unlike hypnosis, it involves mostly the conscious awareness of then client, and focuses on the content more than the form of the narrative.

[2487] Ibid., xi.

[2488] Parry and Doan, 42; 44. These past stories, which involve rigid and often unconsciously held beliefs, are considered as having been "once necessary" yet become "unworkable," as no longer compatible with the client's environment and desired lifestyle. Ibid, 43.

[2489] Ibid., 36. "Buying into" the problem narrative is a trap that many "authoritative" or "pathologizing" forms of therapy focused on diagnosis -namely psychiatric-overlook: "it is very easy for the therapist to fall prey to the problem story, to reify it, and to give it authenticity via labelling it and treating it… Rather than being trained to look for behaviors that are exceptions to the problem story, we have been traditionally trained to be experts to focus even more stringently on evidence supporting its existence." Parry and Doan, 65. See also Borch-Jacobsen, *Making Minds and Madness, From Hysteria to Depression,* 2009.

[2490] "Unexamined stories remain not only unchanged, but powerful." Parry and Doan, 71. Thus, the process of exposition involves a double gesture: a) moving to a meta-narrative level to be able to identify the problematic narrative, and b) examining their consequences: "The stories that people live by, and that shape their lives, "if they are destructive to the person," the stories they live by "need to be exposed for the damage they do." Abels and Abels, xi. Re-authoring thus involves reexamining "the real lived experiences these narratives provide, the hope for change, and the exploration of desired futures." Ibid., 1.

the therapist can be thought to adopt a "suspicious" mode of "reading," remaining aware that "the portion of life narrative a client presents… frequently leaves out important parts."[2491] Like the hypnotherapist or psychoanalyst, the narrative therapist or social worker "needs to be alert to obvious our puzzling omissions, 'hearing' them as attentively as she/he hears what is spoken."[2492] Unlike traditional psychoanalysis however, the focus is placed on underlining the narrative *nature* of the story, rather than focusing solely on its content or signification. Narrative deconstruction thus reveals how the problematic story has been "living the client," how it has grown to "inhabit him/her in the form of meanings and views of the world."[2493]

"Reauthoring," the second phase of Narrative therapy, is both the method and the goal of the therapeutic process itself. It involves taking into consideration the "otherwise" of the client's story, which is to say, encouraging access to storylines which have been "subjugated by the family's and culture's dominant discourse as to what constitutes the right way of doing things."[2494] Because some stories are "historical artifacts carried from centuries of racism, sexism, and ethnic hatred," therapy can in this sense be the locus of a—social, even political—resistance against dominant narratives, and should not be reduced to mere wishful thinking.[2495] Indeed, because it appeared with family therapy, narrative therapy places strong emphasis on the context of the problem, on the social forces which influence the individual's views of the world, "cross[ing] the lines of individual, group, family, institutions and society."[2496] This does not necessarily imply social or political *action* on the part of the client, but rather an awareness of their suggestibility, of the processes of internalization to which they are subjected to in ordinary life: "more than most other therapy options, [narrative therapy] tends to be conscious of cultural power dynamics and

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[2491] Abels and Abels, 2.
[2492] Ibid., 2.
[2493] Parry and Doan, 44. The parallel with suggestibility and hypnotic "possession" is evident here. Parry and Doan also cite Richard Rorty, who—himself referring to a remark of Nietzsche's—notes: "To fail as a poet, and thus, for Nietzsche, *to fail as a human being is to accept somebody else's description of oneself,* to execute a previously prepared program, to write, at most, elegant variations on previously written poems. So the only way to trance home the causes of being as one is would be to tell a story about one's causes in a new language." Rorty, 1989, 28. Here, the parallel between the good life and the work of art—examined in Chapter 4—begins to emerge.
[2494] Parry and Doan, 17. Dominant family narratives also establish themselves via suppression and silencing: "many families invite conformity, singularity, and unquestioning loyalty via the spoken and unspoken stories they share." Ibid., 72. They also underscore the "often 'unspoken' mores" of the family—our "first culture," which, "like all cultures, wants to make known its norms and mores." Elizabeth Stone, *Black Sheep and Kissing Cousins: How our Family Stories Shape Us* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 7.
[2495] Abels and Abels, 28. This offers a potential response to Coetzee's doubts about the "freedom" to reauthor one's life. See the discussion of *The Good Story* further down.
[2496] Abels and Abels, 2001, xii.

the way that people's problems often have to do with internalized hierarchies that they have adopted from mainstream culture."[2497] Conversely, it also implies an awareness of the limits of the "restorying" process itself, which avoids the dangers of engaging in naive, magical thinking. Indeed, as Parry and Doan write, "no one ever fully becomes the author of his/her own story; any such assumption can only lead back into the illusions of control, individual autonomy, isolated selfhood, and single truth."[2498]

This second, more reparative phase of narrative therapy is just important as the first, deconstructive one. Indeed, "to omit the re-vision process is to leave the client in a state of psychological 'free fall'."[2499] Narrative therapy is thus especially sensitive to the groundlessness that would stem from a life devoid of coherent narrative: leaving a client "outside of a story" would be more detrimental than the psychological benefits of the safety which comes with a coherent, unified worldview.[2500]

In its attempt to facilitate story re-visions, Epston and White's narrative therapy aims principally to correct the process where an individual becomes defined as a "problem," and risks becoming a "docile, self-doubting citizen and consumer."[2501] It also aims to minimize the therapist's role as expert, and depathologize the client's symptoms by using a technique referred to as the "externalization of the problem."[2502] This process involves considering the problem as an entity which is separate from the client, encouraging them to "objectify, and at times, personify" it.[2503] The purpose is to reduce self-blame and guilt in persons who are often "problem saturated" when they enter the therapeutic setting. Insofar as it helps the individual understand "they are not

[2497] Lewis, 51.
[2498] Parry and Doan, 43. Ultimately, for the, the individual must "join with others in the universal human action of multiple authorship." Ibid., 43.
[2499] Ibid, 45.
[2500] Ibid., 45. See Wilfred Bion's work distinction between alpha and beta elements. W. R. Bion, "Attacks on Linking" in *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis,* 40 (1959): 308-315.
[2501] Parry and Doan, 18. For Parry and Doan, such narratives produce a sense of "passivity and powerlessness" which can even in turn "account for much of the appeal of narratives of victimhood," thereby maintaining a vicious narrative circle. Ibid, 26.
[2502] The problem is considered as exterior, "separate from the self," and as influencing them—"it brought them there." Nichols and Schwartz, *Narrative Therapy* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 410-411.
[2503] Abels and Abels 65. "Whether it's an internal experience (guilt, self-hate), a syndrome (anorexia, schizophrenia), or a relationship pattern (rift), the externalized problem is always personified—portrayed as an unwelcome invader that tries to dominate the individual or family members' lives. Nichols and Schwartz, *Family Therapy,* 411.

the problem," externalization becomes a "freeing' mechanism" which counters the harmful effect of its internalization and solidification in the person's sense of self.[2504]

In the restorying process, the therapist must not re-write the story himself. Rather, as in modern hypnotherapy, they must adopt a "know nothing" approach, mostly limiting themselves to asking questions that "arise out of the narrative," and encouraging the client to "fill in the gaps."[2505] Here too, the truth value of the story must be set aside, as the therapist merely "explores with the clients how their lives are shaped by the stories they believe about themselves, accurate or not.[2506]

This is why, rather than the author—or co-author—of the narrative, Parry and Doan use the image of the therapist as *editor*, which according to them fits the postmodern context more adequately:[2507]

> Therapy involves the rearranging, cutting and pasting, word processing, and so forth… In this process the therapist/editor works with a story that has already been authored by someone else… the editor's job is not to become the major author but to…provide space for the client to… rearrange the present story such that it suits him/her better. In narrative therapy this is accomplished by interacting with the client in such a manner that a better story is coevolved in the process.[2508]

Rather than providing insight or interpretation, the central function of the therapist is to merely provide "space," through a process of "careful listening" and "questioning conducted from an 'editorial' stance."[2509] Both individuals collaborate in an exercise in "visioning and re-visioning," working towards the production of an acceptable story for the "author" (client)—until it takes on a form that "the client agrees is more useful than the one he/she brought to therapy."[2510] Once again, usefulness takes precedence over truth, and problem-solving mostly consists in

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[2504] Abels and Abels, 65. Indeed, "The work with adults, particularly women and minorities, illustrates the importance of externalization. Time and time again researchers have demonstrated how language and values held by socially upper-class people are used to control, shape, and at times manipulate people along gender and ethnic lines." Significantly, a patient can very well internalize a story "even when they don't fully accept it." Ibid., 89; 69.

[2505] Ibid., 85. As in hypnotherapy and other person-centered approaches, the very positioning of the therapist as a non-knowing, non-expert is thought to be therapeutic in itself: "A great deal of helping that takes place is due to the style of questioning, and to the belief that the questions lead to reflection by the client, and are in the service of the client, rather than the helper." Ibid., 97.

[2506] Ibid., 18, emphasis added. Or alternatively, as psychiatrist Allen Wheelis notes: "In reconstructing a life story, truth is necessary but not sufficient. Truth does not demarcate, and cannot determine whether we would dwell upon cause of choice. Two histories of the same life may be radically different, yet equally true… Truth does not here provide the criterion for selection; the way we understand the past is determined, rather by the future we desire." Allen Wheelis, *How People Change* (New York: Harper, 1973), 115. As Abels and Abels note, "it is important to remember that these are the client's stories, not stories that the worker tells the client to make them feel better, or to make a point." Abels and Abels, 18.

[2507] This serves both to tone down the paternalistic connotations associated with the image of a "therapist as expert," as well as the idealistic implications of the "client as author" metaphor.

[2508] Parry and Doan, 119.

[2509] Ibid., 12.

[2510] Ibid.

redescribing, or "having narrative conversations about the problem until it is no longer necessary to talk about a problem."[2511]

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As we have seen in this section, narrative approaches make *visible* or explicit the impact of storytelling on self-understanding, as well as the use of aesthetic-narrative concepts in therapeutic practice. Narrative approaches to psychotherapy thus consider fiction not as a mere collection of examples, but also as a way of looking at the world.[2512] This implies the adoption of a meta-narrative perspective and an awareness of a "formal" dimension which often gets lost in therapeutic models that focus solely on behavior or physiology to the exclusion of the interiority of the subject. It is with these approaches that modern hypnotherapy can be brought together with other, narrative-oriented models, and can, in this way, participate in the psychotherapy integration described by Lewis. This narrative core (which, as I argued in Chapter 1, can also be called "hypnotic" in the extensive sense), that can be traced across such a wide variety of therapeutic models, places narrative, rather than historical truth at the heart of treatment[2513]—a "truth" which Lewis argues, is "as true in psychoanalysis as it is in cognitive behavioral, interpersonal, family, feminist, or even narrative psychotherapy."[2514] A strong version of my claim, in this context, would be that it is in the hypnotic-narrative dimension at the heart of all therapeutic models, that lies the "truth" of psychotherapy—just as it does at the heart of fiction.

Conclusion: Narrative Truth and the Novel

In *The Good Story* (2015), novelist J.M. Coetzee and psychoanalyst Arabella Kurtz discuss the consequences of the narrative turn in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in relation to the contemporary novel, and draw out the consequences of narrative identity on both therapeutic and ethical levels. Their discussion is especially relevant to our argument in Chapter 4, where we examined the ethical and therapeutic potential of storytelling. In their discussion, Coetzee and

[2511] Ibid.
[2512] Indeed, as we will see in the second part of this chapter, this way of putting literature "to use" in psychotherapy is strikingly similar to the way in which contemporary post-Wittgensteinian moral philosophy claims literature should be used to reveal its ethical force.
[2513] "The content, or chosen approach of the therapy, being determined by the therapist and client depending on their goals." Ibid, 53.
[2514] Ibid., 53.

Kurtz begin by acknowledging that both psychoanalysis and writing fiction consist in "finding or inventing linguistic and narrative structures within which to contain experience."[2515] In both literary and therapeutic fields, the narrative dimension emphasizes one's freedom to redefine oneself, as opposed to conceptions of a life set in stone by the determining weight of the past:

> To think of a life-story as a compendium of memories which one is free to interpret in the present according to the demands (and desires) of the present seems to me characteristic of a writer's way of thinking. I would contrast this with the way many people see their life-story: as a history that is forever fixed.[2516]

However, Coetzee expresses strong doubts about this optimistic premise of narrative oriented therapies, which we have discussed throughout this Appendix. For Coetzee, because narratives can be self-serving, "retelling" or "rewriting" one's (hi)story can lead to self-delusion, with devastating ethical and political consequences.[2517] For him, rewriting one's story risks placing one in opposition to historical truth, on both individual and collective levels. In response to these skeptical accusations, Arabella Kurtz proposes several arguments which help draw out the beneficial dimension of a narrative approach, stressing the ability of psychotherapy to *dissolve* limited/ing and self-serving fantasies, in order to construct more "truthful" ones, an argument which was also present in Iris Murdoch's distinction between fantasy and imagination. Indeed, for both Kurtz and Murdoch, all narratives are not mask-stories or self-serving stories of denial. As I suggested in Chapter 4, both novelistic and therapeutic narratives can be used to expose self-serving fantasies, whether those of fictional characters or unreliable narrators.[2518] As tools in the actual world, they can help work through reality, rather than evade, deflect, or avoid it. According to Kurtz, the limitations of personal narratives are not to be condemned, but are merely a fact of subjective awareness. In fact, the genre of the novel is intimately linked with the interplay between these limitations and the process of self-transformation that is still possible from within their bounds. Herein lies the antidote to the argument according to which stories merely lead to

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[2515] Coetzee, in *The Good Story,* vi. More specifically, Arabella Kurtz defines the aim of analysis is "setting free the narrative or autobiographical imagination." Ibid., 3.

[2516] Coetzee, Ibid., 13.

[2517] "About every story we can legitimately ask, *qui bono?"* Ibid., 60.

[2518] Furthermore, both involve a form of imaginative creative "narrating" or thinking, which is crucial to analysis, especially in the role of the parent in the development of the child: "a newborn baby needs to be thought about by another in order to start to contemplate… they need words to be given to wordless experience, a frame to be put around raw, unmediated experience. The act of creative imagination that a parent or a care giver undertakes in order to think about what it is like to be a baby, and what it is like to be that particular baby, contributes to that baby's earliest sense of the truth about themselves." Kurtz, Ibid., 137. Thus naming, describing, putting to words are forms of creative thinking which help process or "think through" experience and transform it into knowledge. See W. Bion, *Learning From Experience* (London: Tavistock, 1962).

escapism, or to an "anything goes" framework where they all become equal in value, and, consequently, valueless.

Despite his doubts, Coetzee even concedes this point at the end of his discussion with Kurtz:

> It is hard, perhaps impossible to make a novel that is recognizably a novel out of the life of someone who is from beginning to end comfortably sustained by fictions. We make a novel only by exposing those fictions. As a genre the novel seems to have a constitutional stake in the claim that things are not as they seem to be, that out seeming lives are not our real lives. And psychoanalysis, I would say, has a comparable stake.[2519]

In passages such as these, the paradoxical nature of fictional narrative truths begins to appear, which, as I have tried to argue in this dissertation, it shares with hypnotherapy and other narratively oriented psychotherapeutic models. Through "trickery," fiction points us toward the uncomfortable truths which we persistently try to avoid. By presenting and exposing them, it revels the narrative (auto-suggestive) dimension of our worldviews, and its subtle interplay of transformative potential *and* limitations.

At the end of *The Good Story,* Coetzee thus seems willing to grant Kurtz her argument about the therapeutic value of fiction, on the condition that a strict narrative approach be used:

> I would be in favor of a therapeutic psychology which, instead of trying to get beyond or through such projections or fictions, treating them as though they necessarily hide the truth, could instead easily and openly accept our fictionalizing of self and others as part of life.[2520]

As I have tried to show throughout this thesis, this is precisely what hypnotherapy is able to achieve. Working within the realm of "fictionality," of the imaginary and suggestive representations of the subject, it fully acknowledges and accepts the "fictionalizing self" as an integral part of the functioning of everyday consciousness. Rather than authoritatively or covertly manipulating the subject into change, it unveils the underlying narrative dimension of identity and helps the subject reshape it, in ways that participate in their own conception of the good life. In other words, it works towards beneficial transformation by reworking and recreating the subject's "good story." In this sense, Coetzee's concluding remark applies to the novel and hypnotherapy alike: the sense of "freedom or mastery" that emerges from of the act of self-narration—and, I would add, from the ability to self-read on which self-narration relies—may "turn out to be more important than the story itself."[2521]

[2519] Coetzee, Ibid., 191.
[2520] Ibid., 143.
[2521] Ibid., 14.

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